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MORLEY ERNSTEIN

BY G.P.R.JAMES

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & SONS, LONDON, GLASGOW, & NEW YORK

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LONDON
GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS
BROADWAY, LUDGATE HILL
GLASGOW AND NEW YORK
1888

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MORLEY ERNSTEIN:

OR,

THE TENANTS OF THE HEART.

CHAPTER I.

MASTER OF HIMSELF.

"POUVONS nous pas dire, qu'il n'y a rien en nous, pendant cette prison terrestre, purement, ni corporel ni spirituel?" asks good old Montaigne, and certain it is that in many an act where we imagine the body alone takes part, the spirit has as great a share; and in many a thought where the mind seems to divest herself of clay, the impulse was given by the body, not the soul. But besides the contention between the corporeal and spiritual part of our nature, and the sort of swindling that goes on on both sides, he that looks into his own heart must acknowledge with him of old, that there seem to be two spirits within us. I do not only mean two spirits distinguished by their promptings to good and evil, but two principles separate in their nature, in their objects, and in their ultimate dwelling-place, the one tending to the earth, the other aspiring to the heavens; the one the principle of animal existence, the other the principle of immortal life; the one shared with the brutes that perish, the other that essence which raises us above them here and hereafter. What shall we call these two spirits? How shall we distinguish them, the one from the other, in speaking of them hereafter? Let us name the higher and the purer one, *the spirit of the soul;* and call the other, *the spirit of the flesh;* for both are distinct from mere intellect, which each uses as an agent, as each gains the ascendancy, or appeals to as a judge when the struggle is nearly equal. It is upon this struggle between these two principles that turns the greater part of each man's moral history.

One of the strangest points in that contest is, that the *spirit of the soul*, as we have called the one, appeals less frequently to the intellect than her earthly sister, leaving it, in general, to the latter, as if for her uses in this earth the powers of intellect were given, while the soul obtains its impulses from other sources, and, marked out for a higher destiny, receives winged inspirations from the world to which it tends—faith, conviction, sentiment, feeling, conscience;—and oh, how often does that better spirit seize the happy moment to open the eyes which all our powers of mind could not unclose, and strip the world and all its pleasures of the delusions which no force of intellect has been equal to dispel!

At the age of one-and-twenty years——It is a beautiful age, full of the spring, with all the vigour of manhood, without one touch of its decay; with all the fire of youth, without one touch of its feebleness! Oh, one-and-twenty! bright one-and-twenty!—wilt thou never come back to me again? No, never! The cord of the bow has been so often drawn that it has lost its elasticity; there have been a thousand flowers cast away that have withered in the dust of Time's sandy path; there have been a thousand fruits tasted that have left but the rind in my hand; there have been a thousand travel stains acquired that never can be washed off till the journey is done. That which has been lost, and that which has been gained, have both been gathered into the two baskets of the past; and whatever the future may have in store, one-and-twenty, with its many hopes, its few fears, its buoyancy of spirit, its elasticity of limb, its eagerness of expectation, its activity of pursuit, its aspirations, its desires, its faith, its confidence, its frankness, its garden of visionary flowers, and its atmosphere of misty light, can never, never come back to us, were we to whistle till we broke our hearts. No, no; in the sad arithmetic of years, multiply by what numbers you will, you can never get at one-and-twenty more than once.

At the age of one-and-twenty years, Morley Ehrenstein, or Ernstein, as it had been contracted, a gentleman—descended, as his name evinces, from a very old German family, who had made themselves a home in a foreign land, some three centuries before—sat in one of the large chambers of an English country-house, not many miles from the good town of Doncaster. No one tenanted the chamber but himself, and though it was a cheerful day of summer, and the room was one of a bright and sunny aspect, there was a degree of melancholy on the young man's countenance, which might be difficult to account for, if we did not look a little into his heart, and pause for a moment on his previous history. Let him gaze then at the ceiling, and study the quaint arabesques into which the plaster of Paris had been drawn; let him lean his head upon his hand, and

examine the pretty nothings with which his table is covered; let him gaze out of the window into the far distance, as if he were about to paint a portrait of the weather-cock on the village church; but let you and I, dear reader, first put our friend into a microscope, and note down exactly every limb and feature and sinew, as if we were true Kirbys, anatomising a moth; and then let us look in the old almanacks, to discover some of the antecedents of his present state.

The young man, then, of whom we speak, was above the middle height, powerful in limb, and though so young, with but little of the slightness of youth remaining. Health, and strength, and activity, were to be traced in every swelling muscle, and those who regard what is merely corporeal, might well pronounce him a fine animal, even when at rest. When in activity, however—when hunting, swimming, leaping, or performing any of those rude exercises whereof Englishmen are so fond, and also so proud, with the glowing cheek and expanded nostril, the flashing eye, and the strong rounded outline of every limb, he looked like a fierce young horse, before the bit has taught it the force of any other power than its own strength. In every moment of excitement the animal spirit, *the spirit of the flesh*, started up strong and bold within him; his veins seemed to be filled with molten fire, his heart to be full of eagerness and impetuosity, his whole mind one active enthusiasm. He felt within him a thirst for unceasing action of any and every kind, and had it not been for certain qualities, which we shall notice hereafter, he would have been merely one of those who look upon all things round them, as objects on which to employ their reckless energy, and life itself but as a child's plaything.

He was young, dear reader, very young, and had neither learned from the bitter teaching of years nor from any sudden and sad experience, that the face must be, as it were, a veil to hide the countenance of the heart. There are few men who reach thirty, without more or less becoming hypocrites, and still fewer women; at least, as far as the expression of the features goes. There are some with whom the waters of time are like those of certain springs, and gradually petrify the face into a mask. There are others who retain their pliability of features, but reverse the action; cover hate and sorrow with a smile, or conceal joy and satisfaction with an air of icy indifference. There are some endowed by nature with lineaments of marble, and some who, by habit and by art, form for themselves an Indiarubber countenance, which will stretch to whatsoever they require.

Morley Ernstein was none of these. He was very young, as we have said, and nature had made his looks the reflection of all that passed in his heart. His face was as a clear stream, through which one sees to the very bottom. He had never learned to rule its expressions, and those impulses which were but too apt to sway his actions, had still more power over his countenance.

Why then did he now look so sad? Women will imagine that he was in love, for they are all inclined to say, with Alfred de Musset, that—

"La vie est un sommeil, l'amour en est le rêve."

Men—but especially Frenchmen—may be inclined to suppose, with Balzac's gamblers, when they first beheld Raphael, that there was, under his melancholy aspect, "quelque horrible mystère;" and imagine it proceeded from some "douleur inouie." Neither of those suppositions, however, would be correct. There was no one point in his history or situation, that should have produced anything like gloom.

Morley Ernstein was born to wealth and honour; his father had died early, leaving but one child, to the care of a fond but a wise mother, who, though young and beautiful at her husband's death, kept, throughout the rest of her life, the colours of mourning in her garments and in her heart. Some six years before the time of which we now speak, she too had left this world for another state of being, and her son had fallen into hands of guardians, somewhat strict, but still prudent and kind. They had seen that his talents were great, that his mind approached, if it did not absolutely reach, the height of genius, and they had taken care that it should have such cultivation as the land afforded. They were as conscientious with the young baronet's property as with his intellect; and the old family-house had been left in the care of two faithful good women, who had withered in the service of his ancestors, and who now showed themselves scrupulous in maintaining everything in the same precise order, and clean propriety which had been kept up during the life of the lady of the mansion.

The guardians of Morley Ernstein had resisted all his entreaties to let him pass the vacations of school and college in his ancestral house; but on the day that he was one-and-twenty, a carriage and four horses were at the door of his temporary abode before six in the morning, and ere night he was in the dwelling of his youth. Everything had been prepared to receive him, and he had hastened from room to room, while all the moonlight joy of memory lit up each chamber with associations from the past. He slept little, and rose on the following day, to go through the accounts of guardians and executors, and he found, as paper after paper was laid before him, new cause to applaud their care and wisdom—new reason to look upon his situation as one of the brightest that man could fill. The subsequent night he slept soundly; but now, when he rose on the day we have mentioned, which was the one that succeeded, he sat in the large drawing-room, where his mother used to pass the morning, with his head resting on his hand, the broad, fine forehead contracted, the bright dark eyes full of melancholy, the corners of his mouth turned down, gazing at things he did not see, and forgetting all the bright expectations of youth, and all the joys that hope had spread out before him.

Of what was it that he thought? Was it of his mother? No! Time had healed the only wound that fate, within his own memory, had

inflicted on him; and his thoughts were of no external kind whatever. It was that *the spirit of the soul* then, for the first time, made her voice heard strongly. She might have whispered before, but now she spoke aloud. It was as a warning at the gates of life: it was as if some hand, for a moment, drew back the glittering veil with which pale reality covers her wrinkled front, and had shown him, instead of the bright young features he expected to see, nothing but deformity and age. Unhappy is it—at the time, most unhappy—for the man, in whose mind age and youth can change places, even for an hour. God wills us, while we are young, to view things youngly, and when the thoughts of age force themselves upon us in youth, we are like the living clasped in the cold arms of the dead.

Such, then, were the sensations of Morley Ernstein, as he sat in the house of his fathers, master thereof, master of himself, master of fortune, station, youth, strength, and expectation! Oh, how he had longed for that hour! What bright visions had risen before his eyes, of enjoyment to come! How he had strode in imagination over every field—how he had visited every cottage—how he had consoled the old servants for his long absence—how he had made, in fancy, every change that he had devised in boyhood. He had dreamed bright dreams, though most innocent ones; and now the dream was accomplished—he was there, with nothing but his own will to control him in any act! Yes, the dream was accomplished, but it was ended too! Whenever we grasp life's flowers with too hot a hand, they are sure to wither almost ere they reach our bosom. He had not felt as much joy as he had expected; he had been happy certainly, but he had discovered that even happiness is not the bright thing he had thought it; and now he sat and mused, the spirit of the soul seeming to tell him, that thus he would still find it throughout the whole of life; that there is a rich ingredient wanting in the cup of mortal joy which never can be found on earth.

There was a dull oppression on his heart that he could not account for; there was a voice ringing in his ear, telling of the emptiness of all human things. "But a few short years ago," he thought, "here moved my father, filled with plans and purposes, hopes and expectations,—here crowded round him the gay, the bright, the beautiful, the wise, the good—here honour waited, wealth supported, renown followed him—here, too, my mother spent days of joy and sorrow—here she looked with tenderness upon my cradle—here she watched with pride my growing years—here she often talked of the bright future with her beloved son. And they are both gone: their shadows no longer cross the household floor; the roof tree no longer echoes back their voices; their tongues are silent, and their smiles are cold; and the place where they once dwelt, now knows them no more. Thus, too, shall it be with me ere many years have passed; my joys, my hopes, my affections shall soon be in the dust with theirs."

Such were his thoughts as he sat there, though the room was full of sunshine—though the object before his eyes were bright—though one-and-twenty years were all that he had numbered. Judge then, dear reader, whether *the spirit of the soul* was not strong within him, thus to rise and reprove the animal spirit, even at the very threshold of youth. Each was indeed powerful: the elements of earthly and immortal existence had been poured into him profusely; the eager, impassioned, vehement being of this world, was met by the calm, grand, mysterious essence of a higher sphere; and sometimes the impetuous energy of the one, sometimes the stern majesty of the other, gained the victory, and ruled the course of life.

CHAPTER II.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF A LEAP.

We will have done with the philosophy of the human heart; we will talk no more of abstract sensations—at least, for the present; we will enter into no further investigations of causes and effects; but will tell a simple story to the end; never deviating into discussions—except when it suits us; for, as the gentle reader is well aware that resolutions, whether made by man or woman, are intended from the very first to be broken, it would be hard upon a poor writer to force him to keep his better than kings, or ministers, or philosophers.

The thoughtful fit into which Morley Ernstein had fallen did not last long. The entrance of a servant dispelled it in a moment; and starting up, as if half ashamed of the gloom that had fallen upon him, he resumed the tone of ordinary life. Youth, with its consciousness, feels as if man's bosom were but a glass case, where thoughts may be examined like curious insects, and the young man doubted not that the servant would see all that was passing within if he cleared not his brow of the shadows that covered it.

"Bring me round a horse!" he said; "I will ride out." And after taking his hat, his gloves, and his cane, he went into the old portico before the door, and sat down on one of the stone benches which flanked it on either side. The air was warm and balmy, for it was the month of May, the period of the year in which Morley had been born. There is surely something in the season of our birth which transfuses itself into our character, and, I have sometimes been inclined to think, influences our fate. Byron was born in the dark and stormy winter; Napoleon, in the fiery and blazing month of August.

Morley had first seen the light in the fitful spring; and now, in that month, when very often the heat of summer and the cold of winter struggle with each other on alternate days, especially in the land that gave him birth, he sat and watched the bright sunshine and the dark cloud chase each other over the blue sky. He felt himself falling into a new fit of thought, but resisted the inclination; and when the horse was brought round, he sprang at once into the saddle, and struck the flank with his heel. The animal darted forward, but instead of turning its head towards the gate the rider took his way at full gallop across the park, leaped the enclosure at a bound, and was soon out of the old servant's

sight, who beheld him depart, with the exclamation—"He is but a boy after all!"

There was as much envy and admiration as anything else in the old man's speech; for who would not be a boy if they could?—who would not go back to the freshness of early years?—who would not shake off the burden of age and its heavy thoughts? At that very moment Morley was flying from thoughts too old for his years; the animal spirit had resumed its sway, and, in the fiery career of the high-bred beast he rode, the energies of his own corporeal nature found exercise and joy.

A little accident happened, however, almost at the outset of his ride, which checked the speed at which he was flying over the country. We have said he leaped the enclosure of the park at a bound; but he certainly did so without thinking that any one might be upon the high road at the other side. Such was the case, however; and, as Morley Ernstein darted over the fence, he perceived a lady and gentleman on horseback, riding gently along.

The sudden and unexpected apparition of a mounted horseman at full speed, where there had been nothing but solitude the moment before, made the lady start, but it made her horse start still more; and being of that race of animals that is restive without being spirited, the beast plunged, reared, and would have fallen backwards, but, as quick as light, Morley was upon his feet by the lady's side, and with her bridle in his firm, manly grasp. The horse became quiet instantly; it seemed as if the animal felt at once that it could not resist; and though it passaged away from him who held it, it no longer tried to rear with that strong determination of crushing its fair rider which it had shown at first.

The lady, however, agitated with all that had happened, slipped from the saddle, quickly but gracefully, and of course Morley Ernstein aided her to the best of his abilities, apologizing for frightening her horse, and assuring her that the animal was now quiet, that the danger was over, and adding a multitude of other things of the same kind, in a breath.

Our measures of time are all false and absurd together; we might find a thousand better clocks than any that have ever been carried up into the sky by a church steeple. Thoughts, feelings, passions, events—these are the real moral time-keepers. What is to me the ticking of a pendulum? There is many a five minutes, as they are called when measured by that false scale, that form two-thirds of a lifetime. One fortnight of existence has withered more than twenty years, cast down the barrier between youth and age, and dried up the fountains of the heart, like the simoon.

It was not exactly thus with Morley Ernstein and the lady; but the brief moments in which all passed that I have just narrated, comprised for the young gentleman a world of other things besides. She was young and very beautiful.—Is not that enough to load the wings of a single minute with the thoughts of years, for a young man of one-and-twenty? But that was not all; hers was the sort of beauty that he had always most admired, most thought of, most wondered at. It was all gentleness and brightness, but withal resplendent with high feeling and thought. It was the mixture that we so seldom see of all that is lovely in mere corporeal form and colouring: the rich contour, the flowing lines, the warmth but softness of hue, the contrasted tints of the hair, the eyes, the cheeks, the forehead, and the lips, with the lofty, yet gentle, the tender, yet deep in expression. The young horseman had remarked all this in a moment, and he had seen that beautiful face agitated, that graceful form rendered more graceful by the effort to keep her seat upon the vicious beast that bore her. At the same time, the morning sun shone, mellowed through the foliage of a tree overhead, and cast that rich mysterious yellow light upon the whole scene which is only produced when the sunshine falls through the green leaves that owe their brief and strange existence to his glorious beams. That light seemed to give a peculiar lustre to her face—a something that the youth, in his fond enthusiasm, could have fancied unearthly, had not the soft hand that rested upon his as he aided her to dismount, and the deep-drawn sigh of apprehension relieved, told him that she was but a being of the same nature as himself.

Scarcely had Morley Ernstein time to utter the few words which have been mentioned when the lady's companion interposed, saying—"At this time of the year, sir, one does not expect to see people flying over a park fence like madmen. The periodical season of insanity—I mean the hunting season—is at an end, and I do not wonder at the horse being surprised and alarmed."

Morley turned his eyes suddenly to the speaker's face; but he was an old man, with grey hair, and the youth had a certain foolish reverence for age, which was much inculcated amongst those weak people, our ancestors; though it has given way very generally now, under the influence of improvement and the diffusion of knowledge. He refrained, therefore, and strangled an angry reply between his teeth, merely saying—

"I am extremely sorry I have alarmed the lady, and trust she will forgive me. You still look frightened," he continued, addressing her with a voice in which some young timidity, and the slight agitation of admiration mixed strangely with a consciousness, not so much of varied powers as of high purposes and noble feelings; "you still look frightened, and somewhat faint. Were it not better for you to repose for a moment at my house, hard by?"

"At your house!" said the gentleman, with peculiar emphasis, and gazing at him from head to foot; "I thank you, sir, but the lady can very well pursue her ride. The horse, too, will be perfectly quiet, unless he be again startled, and it is not reasonable to expect two such pleasant occurrences in one day."

The young lady bowed her head with a smile that seemed intended and fully sufficient to compensate for the harsh coldness of her companion. "I am not faint," she said—"a little frightened; but I can well go on." She thanked him, too, for his kindness, in a somewhat lower tone; not so low, indeed, as to be unheard by either of the

two who stood beside her, but still softened, and with somewhat of timidity in her manner, as if she felt that what she said to the one might not be pleasing to the other.

Morley aided her to remount, and gave her the rein, for her companion made no effort to assist her. As he did so, he gazed for one instant in her face, and his eyes met the deep blue heavenly light of hers, pouring through the dark lashes, like the first dawn of morning through the clouds of night. It was but for an instant, and bowing her head once more, she rode on, leaving him standing on the road, and marvelling still at the bright vision which had thus crossed his path, and vanished. Who has not, in his childhood, seen a shooting star cross the sky and disappear, on a bright autumn night?—and who has not then gazed long into the wide vacant heaven, to see if the shining wanderer would not appear again? Thus gazed Morley Ernstein after the fair being that had just left him, with that sort of admiration in which wonder has so great a share.

He stood motionless, his horse's bridle over one arm, his cane drooping from his wrist, and his eyes fixed upon the receding figures, till they reached an angle of the road. They were riding slowly, and by no movement in either did it appear that they gave another thought to what had occurred—to that momentary meeting which had furnished him with so many thoughts. He had no reason to suppose they would. Perhaps, indeed, with man's true perversity, Morley might have deemed it not quite feminine if the lady had turned her head as she rode away; but yet he was mortified that she did not do so; and sighed to think that he should most likely never see her more. At the angle of the road, however—it was, perhaps, some three hundred yards distant from the spot where he stood, far enough, in short, to render features indistinct, but not to hide the gestures of the body—the two riders directed their course to the left, and then—but only for a single instant, with a glance withdrawn as soon as given—the lady turned her face towards the scene of the little incident which had delayed her on her way. It was but for an instant, we have said; but Morley felt that in that instant she must have seen him standing and gazing after her, and in his young enthusiasm he could not but fancy that she must have seen, too, the admiration she had excited in his bosom.

Who could she be, he asked himself—Who and what? Was she the old man's daughter? He did not like to think it was so. He persuaded himself that it was not. There was not the slightest resemblance between them; his aspect was harsh, and hers was gentle; his eyes were dim, and hers were bright; his brow was brown and wrinkled, hers was fair and smooth; his hair was gray, and hers ——. But as he thus thought he smiled at himself, seeing that all the differences he had found might be solely those of age. "'Tis but that he is old and she is young," he thought; "but no! there is no resemblance, and then the voices were as different as the croak of the raven and the song of the lark—the voice which is almost always hereditary."

If not his daughter, who could she be, was the next question; and as there is always in the bosom of every one, a ready devil to suggest that which may torment us most, he next inquired, "May she not be his wife?" In England, however, it is not so common as in other countries—where marriages are mercantile transactions, and the altar and the commune often become a mere slave-market—for men to marry girls who might be their grand-daughters; and Morley Ernstein soon determined that she could not be his wife. She might be cousin, niece, connection—anything, in short: but neither his daughter nor his wife. His daughter! No, she was too lovely, too gentle, too bright, for the same blood to run in her veins, and in the cold ice-house of her companion's heart. His wife! —Heaven and earth! it was impossible!

The young man mounted his horse, and rode on, but more slowly than before. The very sight that he had seen had calmed him, for such is generally the first effect of very exquisite beauty. There is power in it as well as loveliness—we are impressed as much as attracted; it awakens admiration before it excites passion, and, with love as with the ocean, the calm precedes the storm. He rode on, then, thoughtfully, and many were the workings of his spirit within him.

Not long after, he reached a village, which stood upon his own property; the cottagers were all people who had known him in his youth, and though they had not seen him for six years, they all remembered him well. It was, by this time, the peasant's hour of dinner, but some one caught a sight of the young landlord as he entered the place, and the tiding spread like lightning. Every door had its occupants, and low courtesies and respectful bows greeted him as he advanced. There was a kindliness in Morley's heart, that would not let him deal coldly with any one; and, though he would fain have gone on, thinking of the engrossing subject that had taken hold of him, he could not resist the good cottagers' looks of recognition; and, dismounting from his horse, he called a boy to lead it through the village, while, walking from door to door, he spoke a few words to his humble friends.

"God bless him!" cried one, as soon as he had gone on; "he is a nice young gentleman."

"He is very like his father," observed another. "I remember his father well."

"He has got his mother's beautiful eyes, though," said a third. "Well, I do think she was the prettiest creature I ever yet did see!"

At the fourth or fifth cottage an idea seemed to strike Morley Ernstein suddenly, and he asked if any of the inhabitants thereof had seen a lady and a gentleman pass through the place on horseback, intending to follow up that inquiry by demanding who they were. But he got no satisfaction there. The cottager had been out in the fields, his wife had been cooking the dinner, and no such persons as the young gentleman described had been seen by either. He put the same question again and again at other houses, but no tidings were to be obtained; and, vexed and disappointed, he returned to his home and made inquiries there.

To the old servants he described the gentleman he had met with accurately enough; on

the lady he would not venture to say much, for like all Englishmen he was keenly sensitive to a laugh, and feared to awaken the least feeling of ridicule, even in the mind of a dependent. He dwelt upon the person and dress of the horseman at large; but in regard to the lady, added only that she was young and handsome.

Human nature is very obtuse to description, and we seldom if ever find any one who either attends to or applies the details that we give, respecting any object which we wish to call up before the mind's eye by means of the ear. Do not let poets or historians ever believe that, by the lengthened descriptions they give, the reader ever becomes impressed with the very scene or person that they themselves behold. Oh, no! the reader manufactures a scene of his own, out of some of the writer's words and many of his own imaginations or memories; or fabricates a personage out of his own fancies and predilections; but both scene and personage as unlike that which we have wished to represent as possible. Thus was it, too, with Morley Ernstein and his servants. One declared that the persons he had seen must be Mr. Ferdinand Beckford and his young wife. Mr. Beckford was the good priest of a neighbouring parish, and was just six-and-twenty years of age. Another vowed that the horseman must be Mr. Thomas Ogden, Member of Parliament for the town hard by, and the lady must be his wife. Mrs. Ogden was somewhere between forty and fifty, and though she still preserved a pretty face, her person was as round as a tub of Dutch butter. A third insisted that it was Lawyer Chancery; but Ernstein knew the lawyer, and replied—"Why he is six feet high, and I told you this person was short."

He saw that it was in vain to inquire further in that quarter, at least; and he now resolved to pursue another plan, to reverse the course of proceeding which he had proposed to follow, when he had first arrived, and to visit immediately every gentleman's house within twenty miles. His eager spirit would bear no delay, and before night he had called on five or six of the principal personages in the neighbourhood. All the gentlemen around declared that it was evident Sir Morley Ernstein intended to be very sociable; and all the ladies, who had daughters to marry, pronounced him a very charming young man; but Morley did not find what he sought.

He dined, wandered out through his beautiful park, hurried here and there till bed-time, and then cast himself down to repose, but found it not, thinking only of the places where he would call the next day, and the chances of his finding the fair girl who had so much excited his imagination. In short, the *spirit of the animal* was triumphant in his bosom for the time. Let us guard, however, the expression well against mistake. Do not let it be supposed that one evil thought found place in his bosom at that moment. He was far too young, and fresh in heart, to admit aught to the council chamber of his bosom, which the fair girl he had seen might not herself have witnessed and approved, even supposing her to be all that her countenance bespoke her—pure, and bright, and holy, as the spirits of a better world. No! but we still say that the spirit of the animal was triumphant—the eager, active, impetuous spirit, the same that leads the lion to rush after his prey, the same that carries the warrior through the battle field—the spirit of this world's things, of mortal hopes, and passions, and affections—the spirit which, in all its shapes, in all its forms, in camps and cities, courts and cabinets, gaining both high worldly renown and the visionary immortality of fame, is still but an animal energy—the spirit of dust and ashes.

Early the next morning he rose and pursued his eager course; another and another round of hours and visits succeeded, till at length he had called on every one that he could hear or think of, within the reach of a lady's riding, and yet he had neither seen, nor obtained the least intelligence of the horseman and his fair companion. The disappointment but excited him the more for some days, and he left no means untried to relieve himself from the irritable curiosity into which he had wrought himself.

Still, all excitements come to an end; and in time he learned to feel angry at himself for what he began to call boyish enthusiasm. He felt somewhat disgusted with the life of the country, however; and as the London season was then at its height, and everybody was carrying up their stock of faults and follies to that great mart of wickedness and vanity, from the less profitable markets of the country, he determined to see what was passing in the metropolis, and to take his part in all its energetic idleness. Be it said to his honour that he knew London well, and loved it not; but he had seen it only as a boy, under the somewhat rigid tutelage of others, and he was now to see it as a man, master of himself and of a princely fortune.

CHAPTER III.

A STAGE COACH ACCIDENT.

SCARCELY had Morley's visits in the country been paid, when first came four invitations to dinner, and then a grand ball was determined on by a lady, who lived near the country town, and had four sons and six daughters. Who can tell whether Morley Ernstein's appearance in the neighbourhood had aught to do with all these gay affairs. Old Miss Cumbertown, who had seen sixty and more drying summers and freezing winters pass over her, till all the sweeter essence of her nature were parched up to a dry haricot, muttered and grinned at all she heard, and prognosticated that the young gentleman would not be caught yet awhile. She knew well what it was to be disappointed in the attempt to catch a lover; and when she heard, some days after this, that the young master of Morley Court had declined all invitations, announcing that he was about to go to town on the very day the first dinner-party was to take place, she grinned a thousand times more. It is so pleasant to see other people visited by the same misfortunes that have fallen upon ourselves!

In the mean time the young gentleman was totally unconscious that there was anything like a design upon him in any of the five invitations, or that he was creating the least disappointment in the inviters; although they did not fail to believe—for cunning always fancies itself opposed by cunning—that he partly saw through their devices.

"Oh, he gives himself great airs!" said one.

"I suppose we must beg his company in very humble terms," cried another.

But, as we have before declared, Morley was quite unconscious of offence, and never once recollected the fact either of his having the command of a number of votes for the county, or of his being an eligible match for any lady in the land. Indeed, he thought not at all of any man's daughter in Europe, except, indeed, of her whose birth, parentage, and education, he had not been able to discover.

After he had settled the period of his journey, the next thing was to settle the mode of travelling. It was very natural that, with great wealth in possession, which he had never been allowed fully to enjoy, he should dream of tasting the sweets of it in every possible manner, and that the chariot-and-four should first present itself to his imagination, as the only fitting way for him to seek the capital. He had very nearly given orders for the horses, and had visions of going at least thirteen miles an hour. Rapidity of motion is one of the inherent joys of youth and vigour—it may be called, almost, a necessity.

He forgot, however, to give the order for the horses at the hour of dinner, and afterwards he strolled out into the country round, and visited the cottages of some of the peasantry who were reported to be in a state of great poverty. He now saw real misery, for the first time, and it had a powerful effect upon him. We have not space, dear reader, to enter into the details; to paint the pale face of squalid misery, and the eager anxious eyes of hopeless destitution. Suffice it, that Morley Ernstein was young; his heart had not been hardened in the furnace of the world, and it was not originally formed of that adamantine stuff, called selfishness. He was not, as some, lavish in his bounty, from mere want of any principle of action whatsoever; but he relieved the unhappy people fully, and on his return home, gave such directions as to prevent their falling back into misery again during his absence, except by their own fault.

After this was done, he sat and thought, and ended, by ordering a servant to go to the neighbouring town, and secure him a place in the stage-coach to London. His scheme of travelling had been changed by his visit to the poor; but not in the manner, or from the motives that many persons may imagine. It was not that he proposed to save small sums out of a princely fortune, for the purpose of devoting the whole of that fortune to the poor, for Morley knew right well that the industrious mechanic, the artisan, the farmer, the builder—all, in short, who contribute by the labour of their hands and minds to the convenience, comfort, and welfare of their fellow-creatures, have a first claim upon those to whom God has entrusted the distribution of great wealth. He believed that though the poor, the honest and worthy poor, must be supplied, must be cared for—that though it is a duty to make up, by active charity, for the inequalities and accidents that the fundamental constitution of society, and the very nature of man must always produce—still the industrious of all classes have their great primary right, which ought to be attended to. It was not that the actual sight of misery made him purpose to deny himself anything that was rational and just in the station in which he was placed, or resolve to refrain from any expense which might encourage the industrious in all classes, but that sight had called up *the spirit of the soul* to speak within him, and to check the animal spirit which had fired his imagination. After he returned from those poor cottages, he found no pleasure in the idea of the gay postilions and foaming horses; his mind took a sadder, a more thoughtful tone. He felt almost ashamed of the bright eagerness of pampered life in the presence of the dim eyes and tear-stained cheeks of misery. His whole scheme changed. "I will go to the capital," he said, "quietly and modestly. I will not present myself in that gay place as the rich man, coming to enjoy, but as the thoughtful man, going to examine and to consider. I will not, indeed, conceal myself; but I will retire rather than advance, till I have good cause to do so. I will seek to find friends rather than to make acquaintances, and rather than simply endeavour to spend my income, I will endeavour to spend it well."

Nothing occurred to check the spirit of the soul, and he continued in the same mood till the stage-coach passed by the gates of his park, the next day. A number of passengers covered the outside of the vehicle, so that there was no room for him in that part which Englishmen always choose in preference to the interior, as if they loved the dust of summer, the rain of autumn and spring, and the cold winds of winter, better than any other of the enjoyments of those seasons. To foreigners this seems an extraordinary taste; but the origin of it probably is that the Englishman, who pushes almost all his affections to extravagance, loves, with a vehemence that few other people can feel, the free air of heaven. Morley would willingly have changed places with the poorest traveller on the outside of the coach; but as that could not be done, he took his seat in solitude in the interior, where he found plenty of room for thought, there being nobody within it but himself.

The coach rolled on with a celerity which no one who has not travelled in one of those small, inconvenient, but wonderfully rapid, vehicles, can imagine to be produced by any animal under the sun. The nearer objects flew past like lightning, the further ones kept gradually changing their place with a quickness proportioned to their respective distances from the coach, which, for its part, like the mind of a vain man, seemed the centre of a circle round which all other objects were running; and Morley's impetuosity was well nigh satisfied with the rate of progression at which they were going.

After all, movement is the grand principle of animal life; it runs in our veins, it beats in our hearts, it advances with our ideas, it enters into

every change, is more rapid in youth, slower in infancy and age, fails as desires are extinguished or objects wanting, grows dull in sickness, pauses in sleep, and ends alone in death.

After driving on at the same pace for three-quarters of an hour, during which, Morley gave himself up to the sort of dreamy pleasure which I have mentioned, of feeling himself whirled on through a thousand beautiful objects, the coach stopped to change horses, and one of the travellers from the outside came in, and took his seat by the previously solitary tenant of the interior.

"It is as hot as if it were summer on the outside," he said, addressing nobody, "and the seat I had got was so unpleasant, that I am not sorry to quit it."

Morley did not answer; but—with the sort of habitual coldness which affects almost all Englishmen, in part pride, in part timidity, in part contempt for all other beings than themselves, in part fear that others should entertain the same contempt for them—he sat silent, gazing out of the window, following his own meditations, and quite willing that his travelling companion should follow his likewise.

The personage who had entered was not one, however, that had anything repulsive in his manners or appearance. He was tall, gracefully formed, with an air of distinction, and a countenance often full of fire and animation, although the habitual expression was that of quick but easy-flowing thought. His brow was high and fine, his eyes peculiarly large and bright, and his hair strongly curled; the only feature in his face which could be termed even not good, was the mouth, the lips being somewhat thick and heavy. His complexion was dark, and the skin very brown, apparently with exposure to the air and sun, but the whole exterior was extremely pleasing; and had Morley looked at him at all, he would in all probability have spoken in return; but the young gentleman did not look at him, and the stranger, after pausing for a moment, spoke again—resolved, it would seem, to make some impression upon his temporary companion.

"Pray whose house is that?" he demanded, pointing to a handsome mansion on the right.

"I do not know," replied Morley, turning round, and gazing at him, for the first time.

"Indeed!" said the stranger; "I thought you were well acquainted with this country. The coachman told me that you were Sir Something Ernstein, and that the park, at the gates of which we took you up, belongs to you."

Morley smiled. "It is all very true," he answered; "but, nevertheless, I do not know. I have not been in this part of England for six or seven years."

The stranger mused; but between two men not absolutely repulsive in themselves, nor particularly disposed by any circumstances mutually to repel each other—the poles of whose minds, in short, are not reversed—conversation soon establishes itself after a few words have been spoken. A single syllable will often do the whole with people whose characters are well balanced, and a word act like the hair trigger of a pistol, upon which hangs the fate of a life.

Oh, how strange and complicated is the web of God's will! How the smallest, the most pitiful, the most empty of things, by his great and wise volition, act their part in mighty changes! How a look, a tone, a sound, a pebble in our path, a grain of dust in our eyes, a headache, a fit of gloom, a caprice, a desire, may not only change the whole current of one man's existence, but affect the being of states and empires, and alter human destinies to the end of time! The present state of France, the whole mass of facts, circumstances, incidents, accidents, and events, which are there going on, may all be owing to a lady, whom I knew well, having splashed her stocking fifty years ago.

"As how, in the name of Heaven!" demands the reader.

Thus! She was going out of her house with a relation in the town of Douai, when, carelessly putting her foot on a stone, she splashed her stocking. She went back to change it; the delay occupied a quarter of an hour. When she went on again, she met, at the corner of the *Place*, a man, since too famous in history, then scarcely known as anything but a clever fop. His name was Francis Maximilian Robespierre. Instead of going on, he turned with her and her relation, and walked up and down the *Place* with them for half an hour. In one of the houses hard by, a debating society was in the act of canvassing some political question. As they passed to and fro, Robespierre listened at the door from time to time, and at length, pronouncing the debaters to be all fools together, he rushed in to set them right. From that moment, he entered vehemently into all the fiery discussions which preceded the revolution, in which he had never taken part before, and grasped at power, which opened the doors of the cage, and let out the tiger in his heart. Thus, had the lady not splashed her stocking, she would not have met the future tyrant; he would have pursued his way, and would not have turned back to the *Place;* he would never have heard the debate that first called him into action, for he was going to quit Douai the next day, and who can say how that one fact, in the infinite number of its combinations with other things, might have affected the whole social world at present?

The stranger mused, as we have said, but after a moment's thought, he replied, in a meditative tone—

"How strange is the sensation when, after a long absence from any place, we return to it suddenly! How different everything appears!—how shrunk, and changed, and withered, seem many objects that we thought beautiful and bright!—how many a light gone out!—how many a sweet sound silent! I believe that it is very happy for us that in point of time we cannot go back again, as we can in space."

"Nay, I do not think so," answered Morley, growing interested in his companion's conversation; "I cannot, indeed, judge from experience, but I should imagine that many an old man would willingly return to the days of his youth; that every man, indeed, when he finds life beginning to lose its energies, health failing, the muscle relaxing, the eye growing dim, the limbs

feeble, would willingly go back to the time when all were in their perfection."

"They would do so willingly, beyond all doubt," replied his companion; "but whether they would do so wisely is another thing. We all wish to see again the scenes of our boyhood, when we have been separated from them long; but when we are gratified, we are always disappointed."

Morley smiled, to find the stranger speaking to all his late sensations, as if he would have divined them; but he only inquired—

"Always?"

"Always, I think," said the other; "because it is in the nature of things that it should be so. Enjoyment is a harmony—the person that is pleased with anything and the object of his pleasure must be adapted to each other. Thus the boy loves a particular scene of his youth, returns to it as a man, and does not find the same delight; not because it is changed, but because it has remained the same, and he is altered; he has lost his fitness for it. It suited the boy; but it no more suits the man than would the wooden sword and the rocking-horse."

"I do not know," replied Morley, "but I should think that the memory of enjoyment would make up for the change in his own nature. Memory is the hope of the past, and both brighten the objects that they rest upon."

"True!" answered his companion; "but then that which he enjoys is not the same, but the memory of his own pleasure therein. Oh no! the life of man is still, forward—forward! Each period of existence, doubtless, has its powers and its joys, as well as its hopes and its desires."

"But I have heard many that I have loved and respected, declare," said Morley, "that in their own case the pure joys of youth were those on which memory had rested through life with the greatest satisfaction."

"Simply because they were the furthest off," replied the other; "but why call them the pure joys of youth? I do not see why they should be purer than those of any other period. Surely all joys are pure—I mean those that are not criminal. Anything that gives me pleasure, or by which I can give others pleasure, and which injures no one, is just as pure as the gathering of a flower, or the pruning of a tree—certainly more pure than crucifying a worm upon a hook, or shooting an inoffensive bird, or many another of those sports and pastimes of which youth is fond."

Morley was silent for some little time; he felt that there was something dangerous in his companion's doctrines, if pushed to the extreme; but still, as far as he had expressed them, there was nothing of which he could take hold. The other seemed to perceive, with fine tact, that the young man who sat beside him had taken alarm at the indefinite nature of his argument, and he added in haste—

"You will understand that I mean strictly to limit enjoyment to that which is not criminal—which is not wrong—in short, all I mean to say is, that the wisest plan for man to pursue is, to go on without ever turning back his eyes to the past; to enjoy all that is natural for his period of life, without regretting others that are gone. Each pleasure is as a precious stone, picked up upon the sea-shore, a thing to be treasured by memory; but because we find an emerald at one moment, that is no reason why we should neglect the diamond that we find the next, or the ruby that comes a little further on. Our capabilities of enjoyment were intended to be used, and he who does not do so, fails to fulfil one of the great obligations of his nature."

Morley was better satisfied, but still not completely so; and had he been older and more experienced, he might have thought that his conversation with his travelling companion, is like that which Conscience and Desire sometimes hold together, when temptation is very strong. Desire still finds an argument to lead us up to the very verge of wrong, assuring Conscience all the time that we are upon the safe ground of right, and trusting to some momentary impulse to make us leap the barrier when we have reached it.

Morley, however, was too young, too inexperienced, and be it added, too innocent even in heart, to have had many such debates with conscience, and to be experimentally acquainted with the tactics of temptation. There was certainly something in his companion's arguments which did not satisfy, but at the same time there was a peculiar charm in his manner, in his conversation, in his very look, which made words that might otherwise have failed to produce any effect, now sink into the mind, and remain, like seeds, to produce fruit at a future period.

The manner and the look that we have just spoken of, were certainly very fascinating apart, but still more so together; not so much because they harmonized as because they differed. The manner was gentle, soft, as though full of rapid thought, yet easy, and glowing with a sort of conviction that made assent easy; and yet there was nothing in the least presumptuous in it. On the contrary indeed, every word appeared to be spoken, more as a suggestion than a decision; while the soft richness of the speaker's voice seemed calculated to persuade and lead. The look on the other hand was full of quick vivacity and fire—the eye brightened up at a word, the lip changed its expression twenty times in a minute, and withal there was an air of reckless joyousness, of rapid careless quickness, which contrasted wonderfully with the metaphysical themes he touched upon, and, by contrast, gave the stronger effect to his deeper thoughts.

That he was a man of station and high breeding one would scarcely doubt; and in his dress there was that scrupulous neatness which is one of the distinguishing marks of a gentleman in youth. In older life, a man may well lose a part of that attention to his apparel which no young man should be without; but before the grand passage of forty-five, no one should deem himself old enough to go out in a bad hat if he can get a good one, or wear ill-blacked boots. The neatness of his dress did not at all approach to puppyism, but every article of his clothing was so well adapted to the other, that the whole

harmonized perfectly, and gave that peculiar and undefinable tone to his appearance which has a vague sort of connection with the mind within, a reflection perhaps we might call it, of the habitual thoughts and feelings influencing the dress without the wearer knowing it. A man's fondness for particular hues, or sounds, or scents, is often no bad indication of the character of his mind.

Morley Ernstein felt not a little impressed in favour of the stranger. He was, indeed, not without strong good sense himself, but still there was a charm that he could not resist; and never dreaming that he was doing aught but passing agreeably an hour which might otherwise have proved tedious, he soon renewed the conversation, but on a different subject.

Let no one, however, venture to think that even a brief half-hour's conversation with another man of strong mind can be a matter of mere indifference—indeed, I know not that it ever is so, with any one, wise or foolish, ugly or pretty, good or bad. We are all nothing but traders in this world, mere hucksters, travelling packmen, with a stock continually changing, increasing, diminishing. We go forth into the world carrying a little wallet of ideas and feelings; and with every one to whom we speak for a moment, we are trafficking in those commodities. If we meet with a man of wisdom and of virtue, sometimes he is liberal, and supplies us largely with high and noble thoughts, receiving only in return sweet feelings of inward satisfaction; sometimes, on the other hand, he will only trade upon equal terms, and if we cannot give him wisdom for wisdom, shuts up his churlish shop and will deal with us no more. If we go to a bad man we are almost always sure to be cheated in our traffic, to get evil or useless wares, and often those corrupted things which, once admitted to our stock, spread the mould and mildew to all around. Often, often, too, in our commerce with others do we pay for the poisons which we buy as antidotes, all that we possess of good, both in feeling and idea. But when we sit down by beauty, and gentleness, and virtue, what a world of sweet images do we gain for the little that we can give in exchange! Ay, and even in passing a few light moments with a dear, innocent child, how much of bright and pure do we carry away in sensation!—how much of deep and high may we gain in thought! Oh no!—it is no indifferent thing, with whom we converse, if ideas be the riches of the spirit.

Thoughtful men, and men of rapid combination, are almost always abrupt in conversation. A topic is started, two of them pursue it like hunters for some time together, mutually hallooing on one another; but the time comes when they separate, ride rapidly on alone, till they have run down the game, and then they come back to rouse a new quarry. Thus Morley Ernstein had soon got far away from the subject of their former discourse; and had followed the thoughts suggested by it to an end, with many a collateral idea likewise, before he spoke again. When he did so, it was merely of an object that attracted the corporeal eye.

"What a beautiful sunset!" he said, gazing out of the window of the coach towards a spot where, through a break in the large wood by which they were passing, the last rays of day were streaming in floods of gold and crimson, seeming to make the forest air thick and misty with light—"What a beautiful sunset! Might not one imagine the glades of that wood filled at this moment with every sort of fairy and fanciful being, to which the curious superstitions of old times gave birth?"

"One might, indeed!" replied the stranger. "It is a haunt formed expressly for the 'good people,' as you call them, in this country. Here the belief in such beings is very nearly extinct, even in the lowest classes. In my country, such is by no means the case, and there is scarcely one of us, whatever be his grade, in whose bosom, if you were able to search into all its hidden corners, you would not find some belief—ay, and a strong belief, too—not only in the existence of spirits, but in their assuming tangible forms and opening a communication with man."

"Are you not an Englishman, then?" demanded Morley, with so much astonishment in his countenance at the discovery that one who spoke his own difficult tongue so well was from another country, as to call up a smile upon the lip of his companion—"Are you not an Englishman, then?"

"No!" replied the stranger; "I am not; but some foreigners can speak your language tolerably, especially when they have lived long in the land. But, as I was saying, there are very few persons in Germany who are totally free from such a belief; and indeed, it is scarcely reasonable to suppose, if we admit there is another order of created beings above ourselves, that there should be no means whatever of communication between the two next links in the same great chain. I confess that I cannot conceive such a thing possible. If there be such things as spirits—if all be not merely material in this moving clay, there must be some means by which the superhuman being can make his presence felt and known to his fellow-spirit in the earthly tabernacle. All our great men have certainly believed such to be the case. Who can read either Goëthe or Schiller, without perceiving that creed peeping through philosophy, and wit, and history, and poetry?"

"Oh, Goëthe certainly entertained such feelings!" replied Morley. "It was impossible for any one so to extract intense sublimity from human superstitions, without being tinctured with them strongly himself. Had Goëthe written whole volumes to prove that everything is material, a few lines of the choruses in Faust would have shown him to be insincere."

"The picture of Mephistophiles himself," said his companion, "were surely quite enough."

"Yes," replied Morley; "and yet there are parts of the character of Mephistophiles which I do not clearly understand. He is all powerful over Faust, and yet seems subservient to him. He appears at his command, obeys his behests, and yet leads, directs, and overpowers him."

"In short," replied his companion, "he serves but to command; and, depend upon it, whether

it be an allegory or a portrait, the picture is a true one. It may be, that the great poet meant to represent the power of the passions. But I imagine that he drew, almost by inspiration, the likeness of that mighty being, whose fate and character have been summed up by Milton, in the words—

'Evil, be thou my good!'

You must remember, that the infinite variety of that being is as wonderful as his power. Milton might draw one portrait; Goëthe another: both different, but both alike. If Goëthe really meant a picture rather than an allegory, he showed that Mephistophiles had bound himself simply to serve, for a certain time, the views of a vast mind which otherwise might have escaped him. He ruled Faust by his wisdom, governed, directed him—ay, even enlightened him; but the spirit adapted himself to the mortal with whom he had to deal. Even by the very tone of sadness that pervades the character of Mephistophiles, the gravity that is in his mirth, the depth that is below his lightness, he was fitted to deal with Faust. Had the character of the man been different, so would have been the character of the spirit. The Magician had power over the finer essence for the time, and the prince of one class of spirits willingly devoted himself to the service and instruction of a mortal—nay, more, it is evident, as far as he could feel affection or pity for a being so placed as Faust, he felt it for him."

"But," exclaimed Morley, "do you imagine Satan to be capable of affection and pity?"

"Why not?" demanded his companion—"more, in all probability, than beings that have never known sorrow or pain."

"You seem inclined to defend the Prince of Darkness," rejoined Morley, with a smile.

"Certainly!" answered his companion, laughing—"if I did not defend him, no one else would; and I am always inclined to take part with the weaker side."

Almost as the stranger spoke, the coach, which had been going down a long hill with terrible rapidity, swayed from side to side for a moment, like a ship in a stormy sea. A violent concussion then took place as the vehicle, in turning the corner of a bridge, struck a large stone, and the next instant Morley felt that the carriage was going over towards the side on which he sat. He had but time by one hasty glance to see that the low parapet of the bridge was close to the wheels, when the stage went over; the stones gave way beneath it, and the whole mass rolled headlong into the river below. It fell upon the top, and struck the stones in the bed of the stream. The concussion was terrible—the carriage was nearly dashed to pieces, and Morley Ernstein only felt one violent blow, only saw a thousand bright sparks flash from his own eyes, and then lost all consciousness, even that of pain.

CHAPTER IV.

JULIET.

THE sensations of Morley Ernstein, when he returned to consciousness, were all of the most unpleasant kind. There was a numbness over his whole body, and a feeling of tingling from head to foot, which, to those who have not felt it, may be difficult, if not impossible, to describe. A violent weighty pain in the head too, a sluggish oppression at the heart, and a great difficulty in drawing the breath, all made the consciousness of life so burdensome, that, when he saw a number of people standing round the bed in which he had been placed, and employing every means that art could devise and skill execute, to restore him entirely to life, he could not but feel a desire that they would let him alone, and leave him to that quiet insensibility from which they were taking such pains to rouse him. For the moment it seemed to him that death was a very pleasant thing; and he who, full of health, life, and buoyant youth, had thought half an hour before that there would be nothing more awful than to lie "in cold obstruction and to rot," now that he had become more familiar with "the lean, abhorred monster," felt not the same repugnance, and almost longed for the still quiet of the grave.

Such as I have mentioned were the first feelings of Morley Ernstein; but, as life came back more fully—as he felt his heart beat more freely, his benumbed frame regain its true sensations, his bosom heave with the unrestrained breath—his love for life, and his abhorrence for her dark opponent, returned in full force; and he could feel grateful to those who were giving him back to all the warm associations of earthly being. His eyes wandered round the little circle that encompassed his bed; but all the faces were strange, except one—that of his travelling companion in the stage-coach; who, amongst the most eager, and the most busy, was superintending with active skill the execution of every mandate pronounced by the lips of a tall, thin, yellow-faced man in black, that sat by the side of the bed near the head. All eyes were fixed upon the patient, with a look of interest in his fate and satisfaction at the change that was coming over him; but the moment he attempted to speak, every one raised a finger to the lip, in order to impose silence upon him.

"You may take away the salt from under the shoulders," said the thin yellow man; "circulation is coming back rapidly. Keep the hot water to the feet, however, and bring me a little Madeira, Mr. Jones. We must give it him by teaspoonfuls. Your friend, sir, will do," he continued, speaking to Morley's travelling companion; "but we must be very careful!—very careful, indeed! I knew a poor fellow once, who died, when every one thought him quite recovered, merely from the people imprudently raising him up in bed.—Pray do not move a muscle, sir!" he added, seeing that the young gentleman himself was evidently listening to all he said. "You have had a very narrow escape, sir—a very narrow escape indeed; and the least thing may undo all we have done. I

never knew, in my life, a case of suspended animation, where a relapse did not prove fatal.—Oh, the Madeira!—now, sir—a teaspoonful every five minutes!"

From all that Morley Ernstein saw and heard, he judged rightly that he had undergone, and perhaps required, the treatment applied to persons who are apparently drowned. He learned, moreover, in the course of the evening, that, at the moment that he had received the severe blow on the head, which had deprived him of sensation, the carriage had sunk deep in the water, and that he would have infallibly perished had it not been for the exertions of his fellow-traveller, who, not being stunned as he was, had soon perceived that he remained under the water, and had dragged him out, through the door of the broken vehicle. He was quite insensible, however, when brought to land, and remained so for nearly an hour, although every means of resuscitation were skilfully employed.

The dangers of our poor friend were not by any means over when life once more bounded freely in his bosom. The headache which he had felt, on first recovering his senses, increased every minute; and ere the next morning, violent fever and delirium had succeeded. For ten days he hung between life and death; but the thin yellow man, whom he had seen sitting by his bedside, was, in truth, a surgeon of great skill; and the unwearied care and attention of his fellow-traveller, whose whole interest in him was only that which could be excited by the companionship of a few short hours, did as much as art to withdraw him from this new danger.

When the young gentleman recovered sufficiently to comprehend what was passing around him, he found another face by his bedside, better known than that of any one near. His old servant, Adam Gray, had been brought, it seemed, from the mansion to attend upon his young master, at a period when very little hope was entertained of his recovery, and for the four last days he had been employed in aiding the stranger in his care of the patient.

Every writer who has ever taken a pen in hand has written, and every heart, even the most selfish, has felt, how sweet is the sight of a familiar face in times of sorrow, sickness, or difficulty; so that the observation is trite enough, and yet few have analyzed the sensations which that familiar face produces, or told us why we love to see it better than fairer countenances, or even those that express as great an interest in us. It is that a familiar face comes loaded with those sweet associations of other times, which are no mean medicaments to the body or the mind. There is a light of hope upon it, reflected from those past days, which seems to brighten all the dark spots in the present; and such was the sight of that old man's countenance to Morley Ernstein. It brought to him the recollections of his early years, a feeling of balmy spring, the thoughts of health and rural sports, and many bright hours long gone; and from the moment that he saw him hovering round his sick-bed, the sensation of convalescence came upon him, and he could say to himself, "I am getting well."

Ere long, conversation was allowed him, and he soon found the opportunity of doing that which he had more than once wished to do, while the grave doctor and the officious nurse had continued to impose silence upon him—namely, to thank the man who, on so slight an acquaintance, had tended him with the care and kindness of a brother. His travelling companion, who had been absent for about an hour, entered the room, shortly after the permission to speak was granted him, and took his seat by the bedside in which he now sat up, while the balmy air of the first days of June found their way in through the open window of the little inn. Morley lost not the occasion, and expressed, as he well could do, in the fine eloquent language of the heart, the feelings of gratitude, which he experienced for all the generous kindness that had been shown him.

"Mention it not!—mention it not!" replied the stranger; "I have no title to thanks whatsoever; I did it for my own gratification, solely and simply, and consequently have no right to claim or to receive gratitude."

"Nay, nay," said Morley, "I have heard of such disclaimers before, my good friend, and know that some men always put good actions upon selfish motives, when they perform them themselves. But the way I distinguish is, to ask whether, abstracted from the pleasure of doing good, this man or that, who denies the merit of all he has done, would have so acted. This man jumps into a river, to save a child from drowning; that visits a prison, to give comfort to a sick man—would the one have plunged into the water with his clothes on merely for amusement, or the other have spent an hour in the prison if no sick man had been there? If the pleasure felt be derived solely from the goodness of the action, the man who experiences it is a good man, and well deserving the gratitude and admiration of his fellows. You saved my life, the landlord informs me, by dragging me out of the carriage while it was under water, and——"

"Yes, that is true," replied his companion, half laughing; "I did, indeed, as Sheridan called it, play the Newfoundland dog, when I found you were likely to be drowned unless assisted; but that is all, and surely that is little enough. I have done the same for a fly in a cream-jug."

"But you have never stayed three weeks in a country inn," answered Morley, smiling, "to nurse a fly in a fever; and for that, at least, you deserve my deepest gratitude."

"Not at all!" answered his friend. "Even on your own principles, you owe me no thanks. I never thought whether I was doing a good action or not. In regard to the first of your mighty obligations, that of staying three weeks in a country inn, it might truly have been a great tax upon me under some circumstances; but just at that time, I had nothing on earth to do. I was going back to London out of pure weariness of the place I was in; for in general, I never am in town before the first or second of June. Here I have had fine air, fine scenery, and a fine trout-stream. What would you have more? Then as to watching and taking care of you in your delirium, I have no merit there: the truth is, I am fond of all strong emotions, and

the watching you, the wondering whether you would live or die, the changes of your countenance, the gray shade that would sometimes come over your face, the flush of fever, the restless tossing to and fro—and then, again, the gambling, as it were, each moment in my own mind for your life—all this was surely excitement enough. Besides your delirium was worth any money. There is something so strange and fantastic in the ravings of a man in fever—very much more curious and metaphysical than mere madness. In madness, one always finds one strong predominant idea; but in delirium it is as if all the ideas of a lifetime were mixed in one wild chaos. Not Talma, nor Schroeder, nor Malibran, could have afforded me so much interest as you in your delirium."

"You have a strange taste," replied Ernstein, not altogether well pleased, in the first instance, at the explanation of his companion's feelings. A moment's reflection, however, convinced him that there was some affectation in the account, but that the affectation was of that generous kind which seeks to diminish the value of an obligation conferred upon another, even at the risk of appearing hard or selfish. "Well," he continued, "your motives are your own affairs; but the kindness you have shown me is mine, and I must feel gratitude accordingly."

While they were still speaking, the surgeon again entered, and his appearance put a stop to the conversation for the night. On the following morning, however, the patient was so far better as to be permitted to rise for a short time, and his fellow-traveller visited him towards the middle of the day, announcing that he came to bid him farewell, as he had just received letters which summoned him to London. "I do not go unwillingly," he continued, "for my plan of life is ever to hasten forward. Existence is so short that we have no time for long pauses anywhere; each joy of each period—each thought, each feeling of each period of animal being should be tasted, or they will be lost, for we must never forget the great axiom, that every minute we are a minute older."

"But do you not think," said Morley, "that we may sometimes, in our haste, taste a bitter instead of a sweet?"

"So much the better—so much the better," replied his friend, laughing; "it is by such things that we become wise. I am quite of the opinion of your great poet, Coleridge, that—

> 'The strongest plume in Wisdom's wing
> Is memory of past folly;'

and depend upon it every man will find in life, that to be very wise, he must be a little foolish. The child that does not cut its finger before it is eight years old, will cut its hand by the time it is twelve, and perhaps its throat by the time it is twenty. What I mean is—for I see you are surprised—that we must learn what is evil or dangerous, by that acquaintance with evil and danger which is fitted for our time of life, otherwise we are sure to get our portion all at once, at some after period. It is like one of those medicines which doctors tell us accumulate in the system, and kill us suddenly when we least expect it; or rather, like one of those Eastern drugs, which are very salutary when we take a little of them every day, but utterly poisonous if we take a large dose at once."

"Might it not be better for a healthy person to take none at all?" demanded Morley; and added, the moment after, seeing his companion about to reply, "but I am not fit to argue to-day, though I think that your system has some flaws in it."

"Doubtless," replied the other. "It would not be a human system if it had not. Heaven forbid that I should originate a perfect system of any kind! I would not commit such a crime for the world. I will only answer your question, therefore, by saying, that if we were on this earth in a healthy state, as your words suppose, it would certainly be very foolish to take drugs of any kind; but depend upon it a portion of physic, and a portion of evil, are reserved for every man to take, to suffer, to commit, and he had better spread them over as wide a space as possible, that they may not be too thick anywhere. And now I must leave you, for the coach will soon pass."

"But," said Morley, eagerly, "I must ask you first, to tell me where I can find you in London, for you will let me hope that an acquaintance begun under such unusual circumstances is not to end here, and as yet I do not even know your name."

"It is not Mephistophiles!" replied the other, who had marked with a keen eye the expression of his young companion's countenance, at every doctrine which might be considered as doubtful in tendency, and had smiled, moreover, at what he considered the boyish innocence of Morley Ernstein—"it is not Mephistophiles! I am a very inferior devil, I assure you. My name is Everard Lieberg. In England, which is as much my home as Germany, people put Esquire at the end of it. On the other side of the channel, I put Graff before it, and the one title signifies about as little as the other."

"But tell me, Count, where I am to find you?" demanded Morley, the other having risen to depart.

"Nay, do not call me Count!" exclaimed Lieberg, laughing; "if you do, I shall fancy myself walking about London, with mustachios and a queer-looking coat, and lodging somewhere near Leicester Square. No, no, I put off the Count here, and I have a bachelor's lodging in Sackville Street, where I shall be very happy to see you—so farewell."

Morley Ernstein was left alone, and, as usual with the young, his first thoughts were of the character of his late companion. Before we grow old, we learn that the character of nineteen men out of twenty is not worth a thought. There was something in Lieberg that did not altogether please him—not alone displayed in his opinions, but also in his manner, a lightness which was superficial—not affected but habitual—and which covered the depths of his character with an impenetrable disguise. It was like a domino, which, though nothing but thin, fluttering silk, hides form and feature, so that the real person beneath cannot be recognized, even by a near friend.

"Has he any heart, I wonder?" thought the

young gentleman. "If so, he takes pains to hide it. All things seem to pass him by, affecting him but as breath upon a looking-glass, leaving no trace the moment after, upon the cold, hard surface beneath. Here he has nursed me like a brother for the last fortnight, and now he leaves me with the same air of indifference as if we had just got out of a stage-coach in which our acquaintance had commenced two hours before."

Morley felt as if he were somewhat ungrateful for scanning so closely the character of one who had treated him with much kindness, and, soon quitting such thoughts, he rang for his good old servant, Adam Gray, and inquired into all that had passed at Morley Court since he had left it—the situation of the poor cottagers, whose fate he had endeavoured to soften; the health of his horses and his dogs; the promises of the game season; and all those things that the most interest a very young Englishman, in his hours of health. The horses were all well; the dogs were in as good a state as could be wished; the game bade fair to be abundant.

"But as to Johnes, and Dickenson, and poor Widow Harvey," the old man said, "I can tell you very little, sir. They have had the money, and the bread and soup; and Johnes had work at the Lee farm. Widow Harvey got wool given her to spin, and I sent the apothecary to Dickenson, but did not hear how he was; for you see, sir, I was just going down to look in at the poor fellow's cottage, when Miss Carr came to tell me of the accident, and—"

"Miss who?" demanded Morley Ernstein, in some surprise.

"Oh, Miss Carr, sir, you know!" replied Adam Gray. "She was in a great flurry, poor young lady, and did seem to be very sorry about you—indeed every one knows she has a good heart, and does as much for the poor as she can, though that's less than she likes, poor young lady!"

"And, pray, who is Miss Carr?" demanded Ernstein; "and why does your compassion run over on her account, my good Adam? Why do you call her 'poor young lady' so often?"

"Oh, because she has such a father, to be sure, sir!" replied the servant. "Surely you recollect Old Carr, the miser, and his daughter, Miss Juliet—a beautiful girl she was—and is, too, for that matter, poor thing!"

"I do not recollect anything about them," answered Morley; "and yet I remember everything for many years before my poor mother died. But no such name as Carr ever comes back to my memory. Who is this Mr. Carr?"

"Ay, ay, I recollect," answered the old man, "it was long ago—before your time. But as to this Mr. Carr—he's a miser, and was a lawyer—ay, and cheat into the bargain, if all tales be true. However, sir, he's got money enough, they say, to buy out half the county; and there he lives, in that old tumble-down house, at the back of Yelverly, and not a shilling will he spend to repair it. He has two maids now, but till Miss Juliet was grown up, there was but one; and then the man that does the garden and looks after the farm, takes care of the two horses. Miss Juliet, they say, has some money of her own, but she spends all that upon the poor people about Yelverly, and upon books."

Morley mused; there was a feeling in his bosom—not an operation of the mind, but one of the revelations of the heart—which instantly convinced him that the lady, whose horse he had contrived to frighten, was no other than Juliet Carr. How she had discovered his situation, so as to give notice to his servants, and send one of them to him, was his first thought; but, before he gratified his curiosity on that subject, by asking any questions, he returned to something which had attracted his attention a few minutes before, demanding—

"What was it you meant just now, Adam, when you said, '*It* was long ago, before my time'?"

"Oh, the quarrel, sir," replied the old man—"the quarrel between your father and Lawyer Carr; when he came about something, and vowed he would prosecute Sir Henry for defamation, as they called it, which means scandal, I take it; and your father struck him, and turned him out of the house, and he has never been near the place since."

"Did you hear how Miss Carr knew that I was ill?" demanded Morley, now fully convinced that his supposition was right.

"She told me they had been passing by this place, sir," answered Adam Gray, "and they heard the whole story from the ostlers; so she walked over, that very night, to tell us, poor young lady! It's a long walk, too, from Yelverly; so she was tired, and sat down for a minute or two in the library, and took up the book that was open upon the table—it was called 'Herrick's Poems,' I think—and asked if you had been reading it; and said, she hoped that you would soon be able to read it again, with such a sweet voice, she made us all love her. I do wonder how that man happened to have such a daughter as that—her mother was a good lady, too."

"Well, that will do, Adam!" said his master; "now bring me some soup."

CHAPTER V.

COLONEL LIEBERG.

THE next day Morley Ernstein was permitted by his doctor to go out, and strange, most strange, were the feelings with which he did so.

It is wonderful how many things on this earth are relative, which we fancy to be quite positive; amongst the rest, every kind of sensation, every kind of pleasure, every kind of taste; so that it is quite easy for us, from our own occasional experience, to conceive how, in another state of being, when we have shuffled off this mortal coil, and cast away the fibres of the flesh, many of those things that gave us pleasure here below, will be abhorrent to us, and much that might seem dull, heavy, incomprehensible to the animal walking in darkness on the earth, will then, brightened by higher perceptions, be all light, and glory, and enjoyment.

With Morley Ernstein, however, as with all

convalescents, the sensations were not exactly changed from what they were before ; some were acuminated, some were softened, since he had lain on the bed of sickness, and strange indeed were his feelings as he walked out, leaning on the arm of his old servant. It was only into the little garden at the back of the inn that he ventured, but it was all delight to him. Nature seemed never to have been so bright and beautiful ; the broad bosom of each common rose that was planted by the side of the gravel walk appeared a chamber of enjoyment, in which some small angel might well pass away the perfumed hours. The cobweb, spangled with morning dew, was a miracle ; the breath of the breeze was heaven. There was withal a sensation of calm, peaceful repose within his own breast, which was very different from the eager fire of his nature in ordinary health ; and during that day, and the one that followed it, he contemplated with pleasure a return to Morley Court, to a long lapse of dreamy hours amongst woods, and fields, and streams, with, perhaps, some thoughts of finding out fair Juliet Carr, and thanking her for the interest she had taken in him.

Day by day, however, health came back, and strength along with it, and eager activity with strength. The longing for objects on which to spend the energies within him ; the curiosity of a young fresh heart for a knowledge of the deeper and more powerful things of life ; that ambition for the vigorous occupations of mature minds, which possesses all who set out in life with strong bodily and intellectual faculties, returned upon the young Baronet with every pulse of renewed health ; and four days after his first walk in the garden, he despatched Adam Gray for the chariot from Morley Court, and on the sixth was rolling away towards London.

In summer the extinction of all the fires—except those which man, the cooking animal, maintains everlastingly, for the gratification of his palate—leaves the English metropolis somewhat clearer and brighter than at any other season of the year ; and as it was a warm and brilliant day, in the beginning of June, when Morley Ernstein entered London, the streets looked gay and cheerful, and he drove up to the Hotel in Berkeley-square, with that feeling of pleasant expectation which comes upon us all when we enter a new abode, where a thousand means and opportunities of pleasure, a thousand channels and highways of gratification, are opened before us, and where sorrow, and pain, and misery, and sickness, and death, are hidden beneath those pompous and glittering veils with which it is the business of society to conceal the abhorrent features of all that is distressing and frightful in human existence.

There are some people who, on entering a great capital, feel a weight, an oppressive load fall upon their bosom, as if all those miseries of which we have spoken were infused into the burthensome atmosphere of the place, and were drawn in with every breath ; but these must be men who have lived long, and known sorrows tangibly, who have felt the tooth of gnawing care, and the beak and talons of fierce anxiety, preying day by day upon the bleeding heart. Such, however, was not the case with Morley Ernstein ; there seemed a well of hope in his bosom, the waters of which possessed a power ascribed to those consecrated by the Roman church, of driving out all dark spirits from the spot over which they were sprinkled. The busy life, the eager energy within him, the warrior-spirit of strong animal existence, always ready to combat the ills of fate, guarded the door of imagination, and suffered no thought of coming evil to intrude.

It would require more time than I could bestow on any one part of my subject, to trace the life of Morley Ernstein during the first fortnight of his stay in London. With the eagerness of novelty he followed various pleasures, sought out various amusements, and dipped somewhat, but not deeply, in the stream of dissipation. What is called the season was that year protracted to a period later than usual. Gay carriages still thronged the streets in the end of June. The Parliament continued its sittings far into July, and gaiety succeeded gaiety, till those who had commenced the pleasures of a London life at the beginning of the year, with bright eyes and rosy cheeks, were pale and haggard, with the round of midnight parties and crowded rooms.

Not so Morley Ernstein : health and strength were returning to him every hour, in spite of the current in which he was now immersed, and by one of those strange physiological phenomena for which it is difficult, if not impossible, to account, the vigour of his frame, the impetuosity of his animal nature seemed to be increased rather than diminished by the consequences of the malady which had nearly crushed out existence altogether.

The reader, perhaps, may think that the young Baronet showed somewhat like weak caprice, or still weaker vacillation of purpose, in plunging into the high tide of gaiety, when he had set out for London with the design of studying calmly and quietly his fellow-beings, and the strange complicated form of existence in which they moved in the great capital ; but the difference between the execution and the design, as, indeed, is generally the case, was produced by the operation of external as well as internal causes, by the accidents of situation as well as the vehement impulse of high blood and energetic youth, contending against the calmer admonitions of a holier spirit within. On his first arrival in London, he followed the plan which he had proposed, and called upon no one but his guardian and Count Lieberg. He felt himself, indeed, bound in gratitude not to make any unnecessary delay in visiting either. The latter, with whom the reader is already acquainted, had saved his life ; the former had protected his early years and had administered his fortune with anxious care and successful wisdom. He, however, not being yet known to the reader, we must bring him on the stage for a moment, and dwell briefly upon a character which, though presenting no very salient points, is nevertheless worth studying as the type of a class. Mr. Hamilton was a banker—an English banker, which is as different an animal from

that which goes by the same generic name in other countries, as the mammoth or antediluvian elephant is from the elephant of the *Jardin des Plantes*. He was a calm, quiet, reasoning man, of aristocratical family, (his brother was a peer of the realm,) and of aristocratical habits and manners. He had been selected from among three younger brothers, to take a share in one of the great London banking-houses, on account of his talent for calculation and his habits of business; and during the course of a long career, he had shown that knowledge of detail and attention to minutiæ which is the essence of accuracy in every sort of transaction. He possessed, however, another set of qualities which are but too rarely combined in this world with those which we have ascribed to him. His general views were broad and extensive; his heart benevolent and kind; and he valued not in any degree, except as a means, that gold with which he was called upon to occupy his thoughts during a considerable portion of every day in his life. There is many a reader who may, perhaps, say, "This character is unnatural—this is one of those phantasms of ideal perfection only to be found in a romance; every one knows, that the habit of dealing with gold contracts the heart, and even if it does not diminish the intellect, it so concentrates it upon one favourite object, as to render it unavailable for all the grander purposes of life."

Thus, reasoning from abstract data, we may all produce very pleasant criticisms, as philosophers have often produced very pleasant theories, and yet be very wrong. The character of the banker is not an ideal one; and though I certainly do not intend to make him the hero of these pages, or to bring him often on the stage, I must proceed to paint him, and must add another touch, which will add to the incredibility of the whole. He was not ambitious any more than he was avaricious. He had a family of several children whom he loved passing well. His eldest daughter was the pride of his heart; she might have bound her brow with a coronet, or have seen herself mistress of the most splendid mansion in her native land. With her father's full consent and approbation, she married a man of no great wealth and no very high expectations, having for every recommendation that he was a gentleman both in heart and manners, and a gallant soldier of a gallant race. This was not like ambition; and there are eyes which may some time or another rest upon this page, who have witnessed those acts of generous liberality, which show that wealth may be gained without begetting avarice, and that the most expansive liberality is perfectly compatible with the most clear and accurate knowledge of detail. Mr. Hamilton was a politician as well as a financier, but he carried the same spirit into all his proceedings, and displayed the clear and just views which spring from a high mind, combined with the noble and generous feelings which originate in a fine heart.

Such was the English Banker; it is certain that he might have some faults, that there might be an error here or a weakness there; but I envy not the man whose mental eye can gaze through the smoked glass of a misanthropical philosophy, to discover spots amid such light as that.

To the house of Mr. Hamilton, then, Morley Ernstein's very first visit was paid. He had always felt the deepest gratitude and regard towards his guardian, and he was now well pleased to express all such sensations at the end of that period, during which the one had the right to control, and the other was bound to obey. Ere he left Mr. Hamilton, he told him the plan which he had laid out for himself in London, but the good banker did not altogether approve of it.

"You are wise," he said, "Morley, not to plunge deeply into what may be called innocent dissipations, but still the society of persons in your own rank is a necessary which you must not deny yourself, not a luxury which can enfeeble or injure the mind. Besides, my young friend, if you would study man and society, you must study both under their various aspects; nor must you look at them apart, for if you would judge sanely, you must see each grade acting and reacting upon the other. The man of rank and station is but a mere automaton, pretty to look at, amusing to examine; it is not till he is considered in his relations with those around him and below him, in the reference which his acts bear to his inferiors, to his equals, and to his God, that you have the great moral agent, the most wonderful subject of contemplation which this world can furnish. Such, too, is the case with the inferior grades of society. All their acts, all their thoughts, all their pleasures, all their sufferings, become tenfold more interesting, tenfold more important, as an object of meditation, when considered in reference to, and in comparison with, the pleasures and sufferings, thoughts and acts of others. Beware, my dear boy, beware, how, in your very outset of life, you gain a *one-sided* view of the grand scheme of society. It is this capital error which is the prevailing fault of politicians and philosophers. It is from this error that we have so many declaimers, and so few reasoners. It is this error which makes the staple commodity of those men, who are continually exciting one class of society against another. It is with this that they trade, and often win themselves most undeserved renown, of which future ages will strip them, and leave them naked and disgraced. It is this one-sided view which actuates the many good, and, in some respects, wise men, whom we see daily altering laws without mending them, and founding institutions without benefiting society. See, my dear Morley, the lower classes, but see the higher also—see with your own eyes, judge with your own understanding; but see all, and not a part; judge, but judge not without knowing all that is in dispute."

"I will try to follow your advice, my dear sir," replied Morley; "for I perfectly understand and appreciate your reasoning. I merely felt inclined to look first into those lower grades, where so much misery and crime, I fear, exist, thinking that I could study with much more ease the class in which I move myself, at an after period."

"Study them together, Morley," said the

Banker; "look at no one part of the scheme, without a reference to the other. When you consider me, consider, at the same time, what influence my personal character and habits may have upon the footman that opened the door to you, and upon all my other servants. Then, if you will trace them home to the family cottage in the country or the lodging in some little back street in London, you will find, that just as I am a good or bad man, just as I am a kind or unkind master, just as I deal well and wisely with my inferiors, a corresponding result is transmitted through a long chain of cause and effect, to the tenants of the cottage or the lodging, of which I have been speaking. The same will be the case, though the process will be with more difficulty perceived, if you begin with a person in inferior station, and trace the results of his acts upon those above him. I have known a casual word spoken by a vicious servant, plant the seeds of vice in a young and previously innocent mind, which have afterwards produced a harvest of misery, desolation, and remorse, in the bosom of a happy and virtuous family. I give you this as but an instance, to show that we are continually acted upon from below, as well as from above. Take, therefore, the best means, examine both at the same time: thus will you gain a perfect view, and will not suffer the ideas acquired by the contemplation of one side of any question, to be so fixed in your mind as to exclude those arguments and facts which would modify or remove them."

"I will certainly follow your advice, my dear sir," replied Morley, "both because I am convinced that it is good, and because you give it; but I only fear that my time in London will be too short to see anything deeply, if, by comparing continually, I double the inquiry."

"Do you know, Morley," said Mr. Hamilton, musing, "I am not sure that there is not a greater, a more miserable kind of evil brought about by studying only one side of a question deeply, than by studying both superficially. However, my dear boy, dine with us to-night, where you will see some of those in the higher ranks, who are worthy of being known. There is a little party, too, I believe, in the evening, and you can begin 'Don Quixote' to-morrow."

Morley smiled, and promising to join the Banker's dinner-table, turned his steps towards the dwelling of his new friend, Lieberg. He easily found the house, which, as the reader well knows, was in a very central situation. The step of the door was washed with the greatest care, and rubbed with the peculiar kind of stone, to that especial purpose appropriate, till it was as white as snow. The door was of mahogany, with a small lozenge-shaped brass knocker, and a copper-plate fixed immediately under the instrument of noise, recommending, with the soft persuasion of the imperative mood, that the visitor should ring as well as knock. Morley Ernstein obeyed to the letter, and, without a moment's delay, a servant out of livery opened the door, and replied to his demand, that Colonel Lieberg was at home. The addition of military rank to his friend's titles did not at all surprise Morley Ernstein; for there was in his whole appearance a certain soldier-like look which is seldom acquired by a civilian.

Everything within the doors of the house was the pink of perfection. The drawing-room was beautifully furnished, and in every part of it were to be seen objects of taste and *vertu*, not precisely those things which have acquired for themselves the technical terms of nick-nacks, and serve but to please the eye or amuse the fancy; but, on the contrary, things which appealed to the mind through various associations—small cabinet pictures of great value, bronzes from Herculaneum, marbles from Greece and Rome, beautiful specimens of the *cinque cento* workmanship, a little Venus from the hands of John of Bologna, and two or three tables of exquisite Florentine Mosaic.

Lying on a sofa, near the open window, which was curtained, if we may use the term, with manifold odoriferous flowers, habited in a dressing gown of rich embroidered silk, and with his fine countenance full of eager interest in what he was reading, lay Everard Lieberg, with a book in his hand, on which his eyes were so intently fixed, that he did not seem to observe the opening of the door, till the servant pronounced the name of Morley Ernstein.

Starting up from the sofa, he laid down the book, and grasped his young friend's hand, welcoming him to London, and congratulating him on the full recovery which his looks bespoke. The conversation then turned to Morley's plans and purposes, as it had done with Mr. Hamilton. But Lieberg declared that he had already laid out half-a-dozen schemes for Ernstein, which he must insist upon being executed. There were beautiful horses to be bought, there were races to be attended, there were singers to be heard, there were pictures to be seen, there was a wonderful mechanical invention which brought into action new powers in the physical world, there was a splendid orator in a chapel in Sloane-street, there was the loveliest woman in all Europe in the third box of the first tier of the opera, there was a new pamphlet on the immortality of the soul, and there was a romance of Balzac's, which seemed written for the express purpose of proving, that—

"Nought is everything, and everything is nought."

The multitude, the diversity, the opposition of the various matters which Lieberg proposed for his pursuit, at once bewildered and amused his young friend. But there was a fascination about his eloquence that was scarcely to be resisted. He contrived to describe everything in such a manner, as to place it in the most attractive aspect to his hearer, seeing, with a skill that seemed almost intuitive, the exact nature and character of his tastes and feelings, and shaping his account accordingly. As an instance, his description of the lady, whom he had beheld on two successive nights at the opera, was such that Morley almost fancied he must have seen Juliet Carr, although, to the best of his belief, she was nearly two hundred miles from London.

"I shall get bewildered with all that I have to see, to do, and to think of," replied Morley, "and so I fear must leave one half of your fine

plans unexecuted. But at all events, we must classify them somewhat better, for you have propounded them in rather a heterogeneous form."

"Not at all," cried Lieberg, "the very contrast gives the charm! Depend upon it, we should not think half so much of beauty if there was no ugliness in the world. Life ought to be like a Russian bath, the hot and the cold alternately; nothing will strengthen the mind so much, nothing will give us such powers of endurance, nothing will keep the zest of pleasure so fresh upon us, nothing will enable us to change with so little regret, as the changing periods of our life compel us to seek new enjoyments, and follow fresh pursuits."

"I should think," replied Morley, "that with your incessant activity in the chase of pleasure, you would soon meet with satiety, and the world's stock of enjoyment would be exhausted while you are yet young."

"Impossible—impossible!" cried Lieberg; "the world's stores are inexhaustible to a man who has the capabilities of enjoying them all. But come, Ernstein, we are losing time even now. Come with me to T——'s; this is a sale day; I know of three horses that are perfect in every point; you shall buy which of them you like, and I will take any that you do not buy. Wait one moment for me while I put off my dressing-gown and on my coat. There is 'Don Juan' for you, or a Pamphlet on the Currency, as you happen to be in the mood."

The horses were bought, and justified fully Lieberg's knowledge and taste; and the rest of the day Morley Ernstein spent with his new friend, hurried on from scene to scene, and from object to object, with that impetuosity which suited but too well with his own nature. At the same time, there was a degree of wit, sufficient to enliven, but not to dazzle, a degree of eloquence, which carried away without convincing, in the conversation of Lieberg, whatever was the subject that it touched upon, which added interest to all that Morley heard and saw, by the remarks which followed. Thus, when he returned home to dress for dinner, his mind was in that state of giddy excitement, which every one must have sometimes felt after a hard day's hunting. As he made his preparations for the party at Mr. Hamilton's he resolved that the next day should be passed in more calm and thoughtful pursuits; but he little knew how difficult it is for a man to halt in any course on which he has once entered vehemently.

CHAPTER VI.

IN SOCIETY.

THE dinner-party at Mr. Hamilton's was such as might be expected, from the character as well as the situation of the man. Splendour, chastened by good taste, reigned at the table; and as he possessed none of the harsh austerity which sometimes accompanies age, although his whole demeanour displayed that calm gravity which sits so well upon the brow of years, the guests around his table were chosen from amongst the most cheerful, as well as from amongst the best of the society which London can afford. There were one or two distinguished statesmen, there were one or two mere politicians—and these classes are very distinct—there were one or two men of high rank and vast possessions; there were one or two persons distinguished for genius and for virtue; there were one or two gay young men, with very empty heads, who chattered to one or two pretty young women, who were easily satisfied in point of conversation. The rest of the party consisted of the wives of some of those we have mentioned, and the family of Mr. Hamilton himself.

All were London people; all had been accustomed to mingle much in London society: all were acquainted with everything that existed in the part of London which they themselves inhabited, and in the society with which they were accustomed to mix. I do not mean to say, that—as is so common—they knew nothing more. On the contrary, the greater part of the men and women who sat around that dinner-table, possessed extensive information upon many subjects; but still the locality in which they dwelt, and the society in which they moved, acted in some sort as a prison to their minds, from the limits of which they did certainly occasionally make excursions, but to which they were generally brought back again by the gaoler, custom, ere they had wandered far.

Such is ordinarily the great evil of London society to a stranger. Unless an effort is charitably made for the sake of the uninitiated, the conversation of the English capital is limited to subjects of particular rather than general interest; and where a Frenchman would sport over the whole universe of created things, solely for the purpose of showing his agility, an Englishman's conversation, following the bent of his habits, sits down by his own fireside, and seldom travels beyond the circle in which he lives. The effect of this contraction is curious and unpleasant to a stranger; but that stranger himself, if he be gentlemanly in habits and powerful in mind, very often produces a miraculous and beneficial change upon the society itself. If the people composing it really possess intellect and information, and the narrowness of their conversation proceed merely from habit, there is something in the freshness of the stranger's thoughts which interests and excites them. They make an effort to keep up with him on his own ground; the animation of the race carries them away, and off they go, scampering over hill and dale, as if they were driving after a fox.

Such was the case in the present instance. Morley Ernstein, though he had been in London several times during his school and college life, knew little of it but the names of certain streets, the theatres, the opera, and the park. He could not talk of what had taken place at Almack's the night before. He was not conversant with any of the scandal that was running in the town; he did not know who was going to marry who; and was quite unaware that Lady Loraine had had two husbands before, and was going to take a third. All the tittle-tattle, in short, of that quarter of London in which fashionable people live, was as unknown to him as the gossip of the

moon; and during some ten minutes, as he sat at a little distance from Mr. Hamilton himself, he remained in profound silence, eating his soup and his fish, with as much devotion as if the *Almanac des Gourmands* had been his book of common prayer.

After talking for some time to other people, Mr. Hamilton cast his eyes on his former ward, and knowing that he was neither shy, nor stupid, nor sullen, nor gluttonous, he wondered to see him buried in profound meditations over the plate that was before him. At that moment, however, his ear caught the sound of the conversation that was taking place on either side of Morley.

"The Duchess has such excellent taste," said the lady on his right hand; "so she insisted upon it, that it should be dark green, with a thin line of stone colour, between the black and the green, and the arms only in light and shade."

Mr. Hamilton perceived that she was talking of the Duchess of Watercourse's new carriage, but Morley Ernstein knew nothing about it.

"Oh! but I know it did!" replied the young lady, on Ernstein's other side, speaking to a young gentleman, who might quite as well have been a young lady too; "it cost five hundred francs in Paris, and that is twenty pounds—is it not? But then it was *à point d'armes*, and it was trimmed with the most beautiful valenciennes, three fingers broad."

Mr. Hamilton guessed that she was talking of a pocket-handkerchief; but what she said was as unintelligible to Morley, as an essay on the differential calculus would have been to her. At that moment the young Baronet raised his eyes, with a curious sort of smile, to the face of his former guardian, and Mr. Hamilton certainly read his look, and connected it with their conversation of that morning. It seemed to say —"Notwithstanding all your exhortations, my good friend, the study of the higher classes of society does not appear to me to tend much to edification." But Mr. Hamilton, who knew that there is such a thing as being stupid by convention, made an effort to give his young friend an opening, and consequently addressing the lady who had last been speaking, he said—"Pray what do you call *à point d'armes*, Lady Caroline?—I confess I am very ignorant, and so, I fear, is my friend Morley, next to you."

The young lady coloured a little, and laughed, saying—"I was only talking of a pocket-handkerchief which cost five hundred francs."

"Was any one wicked enough to give it?" said Morley, to whom she had addressed the last few words.

"O dear, yes," she replied; "we good people in London are wicked enough to do anything for the sake of fashion."

"There is candour enough, at least, in the avowal," thought Morley Ernstein, and there was something in the young lady's tone as she answered, which struck him, and made him conceive that his first opinion of her mental powers might not be altogether accurate.

Let it be remarked that the very general idea, that speech consists of words alone, is extremely erroneous. That the parts of speech, indeed, which are beaten into us at school, and for which, during a certain period of our lives, we curse all the grammarians that ever lived, from Priscian down to Lily, consist entirely of words, is true; but he who looks closer than any of these grammar-makers at the real philosophy of language, will find that speech consists of three distinct branches—words, looks, and tones. All these must act together to make what is properly called speech. Without either of the two last branches, the words rightly arranged, form but what is called language; but that is a very different thing. How much is there in a tone!—what a variety of meanings will it give to the same word, or to the same sentence! It renders occasionally the same phrase negative or affirmative; it continually changes it from an assertion to an interrogation. The most positive form of language in the world, under the magic influence of a tone, becomes the strongest expression of doubt, and "I will not" means "I will" full as frequently as anything else.

Tones, too, besides showing the meaning of the speaker at the moment, occasionally go on to display the character of his mind or the habitual direction of his thoughts; and it was by this interpreter that Morley Ernstein was led at once to translate the little insignificant moral that fell from his fair neighbour's lips, into a hint, that her mind did not always dwell upon the frivolous things of which she had just been speaking. He followed the direction in which she led: the conversation grew brighter, more animated; many persons took part in it; many subjects were discussed; the freshness of Morley's mind led others gaily after him. The vehemence and eagerness of his natural character, carried him off to a thousand subjects, which he at first never dreamed of touching upon; and in short, the conversation of the next half-hour was like the wild gallop which we have seen him take across his own park; and, as then too, he ended by leaping the wall at a bound, and plunging into a topic, which might well be compared to the high road, being neither more nor less than politics.

A sudden silence followed, and the young gentleman, feeling that he had gone quite far enough, drew in the rein, and stopped in full course. The impetus however was given, the thoughts of those around him were led so far away from all the ordinary subjects of discussion at a London party, that they would have found it difficult to get back again even if they had been so inclined, which, however, was the case with but few of them; and one or two of the elder and more distinguished persons present, purposely led Morley on to speak upon various subjects with which they judged him to be well acquainted. It was done with tact and discretion, however, in such a manner as to draw him out, without letting him perceive that any one looked upon him as a sort of American Indian.

On rising from table, a Peer who had figured in more than one administration, drew Mr. Hamilton aside, and made Morley the subject of conversation, while that young gentleman himself was talking for a few moments with an elderly man of amiable manners, called Lord Clavering.

"A very remarkable young man, Mr. Hamilton!" said the statesman—"somewhat fresh and

inexperienced; but his ideas are very original, and generally just. Is his fortune large?"

"Very considerable!" replied Mr. Hamilton; "his father, whom you must have known, left two large estates, one called the Morley Court estate; the other still larger, but not so productive, in the wilds of Northumberland. He succeeded when very young, and as you may suppose, I have not let the property decrease during his minority."

"I know, Mr. Hamilton—I know, Mr. Hamilton!" replied the Peer, with a meaning smile. "Would it not be better to bring the young gentleman into the House of Commons? There is the old borough, you know, Hamilton, will be vacant after this session; for poor Wilkinson accepts the Hundreds, on account of bad health. My whole influence shall be given to your young friend, if he chooses to stand."

Mr. Hamilton bowed, and thanked the Peer, but somewhat drily withal, saying, "I will mention to him what your lordship says;" and then, turning away, he spoke to some of his other guests.

Not long after, the knocker of Mr. Hamilton's door became in great request, footman after footman laying his hand upon it, and endeavouring, it would seem, to see how far he could render it a nuisance to every one in the neighbourhood. Crowds of well-dressed people, of every complexion and appearance under the sun, began to fill the rooms, and certainly afforded—as every great party of a great city does—a more miscellaneous assortment of strange animals than can be found in the Regent's Park, or the Jardin des Plantes. Putting aside the difference of hue and colouring—the fair, the dark, the bronze, the sallow, the ruddy, the pale—and the differences of size—the tall, the short, the fat, the thin, the middle-sized—and of name, the variations of which were derived from every colour under heaven, black, brown, green, grey, white, and every quarter which the wind blows from, east, west, north, and south—and the difference of features—the bottle-nosed, the small-eyed, the long-chinned, the cheek-boned, down to the noseless rotundity of a Gibbon's countenance, and the saucer-eyes that might have suited the owl in the Freyschutz—putting aside all these, I say there were various persons, each of whom might have passed for a *lusus naturæ*, were not many such to be found in every assembly of this world's children. There were some without heads, and some without hearts, some without feelings, and some without understanding. Some were simply bundles of pulleys and ropes, with a hydraulic machine for keeping them going—termed, by courtesy, flesh, bones, and blood, but none the less mere machines as ever came out of Maudslay's furnaces. Some were but bags of other people's ideas, who were propelled about the world as if on castors, receiving all that those who were near them chose to cram them with. Others were like what surveyors call a spirit-level, the fluid in which inclines this way or that, according to that which it leans upon. There were those, too, whose microscopic minds enlarge the atoms under their own eyes, till mites seem mountains, but who yet can see nothing further than an inch from their own noses; and there were those, also, who appear to be always gazing through a theodolite, so busily gauging distant objects as to overlook everything that is immediately before them. There was, in short, the man of vast general views, who can never fix his mind down to particular truths, and the man of narrow realities, who cannot stretch his comprehension to anything that he has not seen. Besides all these, there was the ordinary portion of the milk-and-water of society; a good deal of the vinegar; here and there some spirits of wine, a few flowers, and a scanty portion of fruit.

In the midst of all this, what did Morley Ernstein do? He amused himself greatly, as every young man of tolerable intellect might do; he laughed at some, and with others; was little annoyed by any; and, with a heart too young to be a good hater, he saw not much to excite anger, though a good deal to excite pity. There were some, however, who pleased him much. One or two young men, whose manners, tone, and countenance he liked; and more young women, whom, of course, he liked better still. He was a good deal courted, and made much of; and many ladies who had daughters, marriageable and unmarried, sent people to bring him up, and introduce him. Morley thought it very natural that such should be the case. "Were I a mother," he said to himself, "which, thank Heaven, I never can be, I would do just the same. People cry out upon this sort of thing—I really do not see why they should do so, more than censure a father for getting his son a commission in the Guards. It is right that we should wish to see our children well provided for; and so long as there is nothing unfair, no deception, no concealment, the purpose is rather honourable than otherwise."

Morley Ernstein knew that his large fortune and position in society must cause him to be regarded as a good match by more than half the mothers in England; he had heard so, and believed it; but he did not suffer that belief to make him either conceited or suspicious. "It is a great advantage to me," he thought; "for it gives me the entrance into many a house where I could not otherwise penetrate, and puts me above the consideration of wealth, which I might otherwise be driven to, in the choice of my future wife. Thank God! I can afford to wed the poorest girl in Europe if I find that she possesses those qualities which I believe will make me happy."

With these feelings, Morley Ernstein could hardly fail to make himself agreeable in the society of women; and certain it is, that many of those intriguing mothers, who go beyond that just limit which his mind had clearly fixed, thought, when they saw his careless and unsuspicious manner, his want of conceit in the gifts of fortune, and the readiness with which he met any advances, that he would be an easy as well as a golden prize, and prepared themselves to do battle with their rivals in the same good cause, for the possession of the young Baronet. They found themselves mistaken, for the simplest of all reasons, that mothers who could scheme, and contrive, and deceive, for the purpose of entangling him, were precisely those who could by no possible means bring up

a daughter in such a way as to satisfy, even in manners, the young heir of Morley Court.

However, the evening passed pleasantly for Morley Ernstein. He was amused, as I have said; but, in truth, there was something more. He was interested and excited. Where is the young man of one-and-twenty to be found, who will not let his heart yield, in a great degree, to the effect of scene and circumstance?—to the moving of fair and graceful forms around him?—to the sound of sweet voices, mingled with music?—to the glittering of bright jewels, and of brighter eyes? and to soft words and gentle looks, enlivened from time to time by flights of gay wit, or even thoughtless merriment. Morley certainly passed through the rooms, criticising as he went, and found much interest in examining the characters of the persons present; but that was not all: he gradually became one of them himself in feeling, took an individual interest as well as a general one, in what was going on, shared in the excitement, and went home at length, after having enjoyed the whole probably ten times as much as any one there, except it was some young girl of eighteen, who met the man she hoped might love her, or some unknown youth who had never before obtained admission to the higher classes of English society.

CHAPTER VII.

A WHIM OF ERNSTEIN'S.

THE general diffusion of knowledge is a very great thing, no doubt, and the cultivation of intellectual powers, in every grade of life and class of society, may probably produce a very excellent result; but yet, the man who goes about the world with his eyes open—it is certainly very rare to find such a man, for the great mass of human beings decidedly keep their eyes shut altogether, or, at best, but half unclosed—the man who goes about the world with his eyes open will be inclined, from a great number of very curious facts that he perceives, to deduce a theory, or, perhaps, if that be too positive a term, we may say, to build up an hypothesis, very much at variance with the dream of the French philosophers before the first revolution, regarding the perfectibility of human nature. He will be inclined to imagine that the will of God may allot to a certain number of mortals only a certain portion of genius, and that when a very great share of this genius is concentrated in a few individuals of the number, the rest of the multitude remain dull and incapable, while the few produce the most sublime fruits of human intellect; and, on the contrary, where the allotted portion of talent is spread over a great surface, divided amongst many, not only few distinguish themselves from the rest, but none produce anything equal to the works brought into being by the two or three more gifted men which we have referred to in the other case. Thus, in the present age, where all is light, in not one of the arts do we find such wonderful results as we might anticipate from the general diffusion of knowledge. It is very true, great discoveries have been made—that we have had Herschells, La Places, Faradays—that we have discovered steam-engines, railroads, electric telegraphs; but, though the assertion may seem bold, the gauge of original powers in the human mind is to be found more in the arts than in the sciences. The sciences build upon tradition; they are cumulative, and all the generations of the past together hold out the hand to raise up the diligent aspirer to a height above themselves. Not so the arts; for though the scientific part of each may be improved, by the accumulation of knowledge, that part which gives them their fire and vigour depends upon the genius of each individual artist; and just in the same proportion as you find a certain degree of skill very generally diffused, you will find a multitude of poets, painters, statuaries, and a sad deficiency of excellence amongst them.

Nothing, perhaps, showed the grandeur and the grasp of ancient art more strongly than the vigour with which the old painters used the effect produced upon the human mind by the power of contrast, and the infinite skill with which they employed that power, so as never to violate those essential principles of harmony which affect painting and sculpture fully as much as they affect music and poetry. Where is the man of the present day who can set red, and yellow, and blue garments side by side with hues of the most sparkling brightness, and yet in no degree offend the eye, or produce the least sensation of harshness upon the mind? So, nevertheless, it is in the paintings of almost all the finest old masters; and we shall also find, that in life itself, one of the greatest zests to enjoyment is striking contrast, provided we can obtain it without any harshness of transition.

Morley Ernstein sat at breakfast, on the following day, somewhat later than usual, thinking over all the people and the things he had seen, and all the words and sounds he had heard, and as, though somewhat variable in his moods, he was not one of those monsters of philosophy who come out into the world at the age of one-and-twenty, like Minerva all armed from the head of Jove, with a sombre and supercilious disgust for common life and its vanities—as he was, in short, neither less nor more than an eager, impetuous, though talented and feeling, young man, it must be confessed, he felt a little of that sort of giddiness of brain, and hurry of ideas, which follows excitement of any kind. His reveries, however, were soon broken in upon by the appearance of his friend Lieberg, who did not take the seat placed for him, but immediately exclaimed—

"Come, Ernstein, you are on the search for strange things; I have one all ready for you. I am going to Bow-street, and on what occasion I will tell you by the way. There you may make a mental breakfast upon all the rogues and vagabonds that are served up fresh every morning about eleven, like new shrimps at Worthing."

"I shall be delighted," replied Morley. "I long extremely to see a good deal more of those gentry; they and their manners have always formed a subject of wonder and interest for my imagination."

"You may pamper its appetite here to the full," answered Lieberg; "but come, I shall be late."

Morley Ernstein was speedily equipped and rolling along in Lieberg's cabriolet towards that street where, in days of yore, a thieves' coffee-house appeared on one side of the way, nearly opposite to the place whence so many of them were sent to trial and to death. As a Bow-street officer once expressed it—"The house had been established there, that the gentlemen might always be ready when they were wanted." As they proceeded, Lieberg told him that his pocket had been picked of a gold snuff-box, coming out of the opera on the preceding night.

"The thing was done in the most deliberate manner," he said. "I found myself pressed upon very hard by three strong fellows, and feeling a sort of waving undulation of my pocket behind, I turned round to look, and saw a very well-dressed man in the act of abstracting the box, without any great ceremony or delicacy. With the fullest intentions of knocking him down, I was prevented from moving in any way by the two men who pressed me on either side, and who, by a well-devised method of squeezing their victim, held me as if in a vice. Scarcely could I turn my head round again, when I found something tugging hard at my watch; luckily there was a strong guard round my neck, but, nevertheless, after the conquest of my snuff-box had been fully effected, the fellow who was before me still gave two hearty pulls, and when he ceased, had the impudence to say, with a grin—'That's a good chain, sir—I'd advise you to take care of it.' They then shouted to each other—'Be off—be off!' and began running up the Haymarket at full speed. I chased the man who had got the box for some way, crying—'Stop thief!' A watchman sprang his rattle, and tried to seize one of the fellows; but, by a dexterous movement, the pickpocket tripped up the poor Charley's feet, and he, rolling down before me, stopped me for the moment, and the fellows escaped. I immediately sent for a Bow-street officer, described my friend who had got the snuff-box, and this morning was told that he is in custody. A curious hint, however, was given me by my good friend R——, the officer. 'Which do you want to do, sir—get your snuff-box, or punish the man? You can't do both, you know.' 'To get my snuff-box,' I replied; 'so if you can manage that for me, I can contrive not to be quite sure of his identity, you know.' 'No, no, sir,' said R——, with a wink of his eye, 'that's no go; you must swear to him positively, otherwise the fellow will think you've got no hold of him, and they'll keep the yellow. You be quite sure, and we'll have an alibi ready.' So you see, Ernstein, I am going to play my part in a pretty farce."

As he spoke the last words, the cabriolet rolled up to the door of the police-office in Bow-street, round which were standing numerous groups of men and women, whose character was anything but doubtful, and whose appearance was certainly by no means prepossessing, whatever their practices might be. There might be seen the face pale and swollen from habitual drunkenness, looking like a moulded lump of unbaked dough, with an expression which will bear no logical description, though it was marked and peculiar enough. It was the expression of stupid cunning, if one may use such a term, and is seldom to be met with, except in the countenances of those in whom drunkenness is only an accessory to other vices. There, too, might be beheld all the terrible marks, with which crime brands upon the forehead of the guilty the history of their faults and punishment. The red vermilion lines about the mouth and eyelids; the swelled and sometimes blackened eyes; the face covered with many a patch and plaster; the hair rugged and dirty; the dull, downcast look, not of active but of passive despair, seeing nothing round it, but fixing the corporeal eyes upon blankness, while looking with its mental eyes into itself.

Through a crowd of such beings standing round the door of the police-office in Bow-street, Morley and his friend drove up to the side of the pavement, and jumped out of the cabriolet, while Lieberg's young groom sprang to the head of the tall, powerful horse, who seemed as if he could have run away with him like a feather, and held him firm with both hands, like a small bull-dog pinning an immense bull. Along the dirty passage, the wainscoted walls of which, on either side, about five feet from the ground, were traced with a long-continued smear of greasy black, from the incessant rubbing of human shoulders, Lieberg, and his companion, walked on—one or two very doubtful-looking people giving way before the two swells, as they internally termed them—into the room where the magistrates were sitting.

There were several persons already at the bar, and in the place assigned to the attorneys were various shrewd-looking, keen-faced men, with eyes full of business, while in one or two instances an ostentatious blue bag appeared beside them. More than one personage, however, who seemed merely an idler, was also amongst the select; while at the back of the part appropriated to the people, chatting carelessly over totally different subjects, was a group of friendly officers and pickpockets, screened from the bench and the bar by a tolerably thick row of human heads, male and female, through the interstices between which, a girl of fourteen, who seemed already a prostitute, and a boy somewhat younger, were striving to get a view of what was passing at the bar. The court itself possessed an atmosphere redolent of a peculiarly disagreeable smell of human nature, mixed with second-hand whiffs of beer, tobacco, and gin, which, to the more refined noses of the two gentlemen who now entered the court, and especially to that of Morley Ernstein, which was principally accustomed to the free air and sweet scents of the country, was anything but fragrant.

The case before the magistrates was disposed of ere any notice was taken of Lieberg and his companion; but then, the gentleman who had relieved him of his snuff-box on the night before, being placed at the bar, and the rank, station, and appearance of the two friends being taken into due consideration by His Worship, they were invited to take their places on the bench, and the charge was entered into. Lieberg detailed the whole affair, and swore to the prisoner's

identity; a keen-faced man asked him several questions on behalf of the prisoner, and the magistrate, after giving the personage at the bar a proper warning not to say anything more than he liked, interrogated him in turn.

The man positively declared, that the gentleman must be mistaken, affirming, with a sly look and half-suppressed grin, that he did not mean to impeach the truth and honour of such a gentleman as he was, but that there was a mistake somewhere; for at that very hour, and for a full hour before and after, he was with a club called the "Rum Fellows," which met weekly at a certain house that he named. Very honest men, they were, he said, though they were Rum Fellows, and a number of respectable tradesmen too. He could prove it, he said, for there were lots of witnesses. He would call one immediately, whom he had sent for as soon as he was taken up.

He accordingly called a Mr. Higgins, but for a moment or two Mr. Higgins did not appear, and there was a murmur ran through the court in consequence, which no one took pains to keep from the ears of the bench, of, "Where is he? where is he?—where's Bill Jones's alibi?" and at length the call for Bill Jones's alibi was roared with a stentorian voice along the passage, and transmitted to the public-house on the opposite side of the street.

A moment after, in rushed a short, stout, swarthy man, very well dressed, after the fashion of a respectable tradesman. His coal-black hair was as smooth as a mirror; his linen was clean, and white; he had a pair of drab gaiters upon his sturdy legs, a black coat, a Marcellas waistcoat, and a coloured handkerchief. His eyes were black and large, his teeth fine and white, and on a fat little finger he wore a fat, long ring. He was a little out of breath with haste, and, as he appeared before the magistrates, he wiped from the corners of his mouth the last vestiges of what the people of that place generally term, "something *short*," which he had taken to keep him fresh before the court. He bowed low to the sitting magistrates, low to Lieberg and Ernstein, and then nodded to the prisoner at the bar, exclaiming—"Ah, Bill! what's the matter? Surely you did not get drunk last night after you left us!"

His innocent mind being enlightened, in regard to the charge against his friend, he swore most positively, that Bill Jones had been with him and others, at a public-house named the "George," celebrating the mysteries of a club called the "Rum Fellows," at the very hour when Colonel Lieberg's snuff-box had been extracted from his pocket. He swore that the said Bill Jones had been there an hour before and an hour afterwards; and he did, moreover, what, to the uninitiated, might seem a dangerous proceeding—that is to say, he entered into minute particulars as to what Bill Jones said or did on that occasion.

"Well, then, Mr. Higgins," said the magistrate, "if such be the case, there must be, doubtless, others of your club who can swear to the same facts as yourself; if the prisoner thinks fit, he can call another witness."

The prisoner was prepared upon this point also, and he accordingly called a Mr. Farebrother. While Mr. Farebrother was being sought for, Mr. Higgins thought fit to enlighten the court upon his profession, saying, he did not see why his word should be disbelieved, as he was a respectable tradesman.

"Yes, Mr. Higgins," said the magistrate, "I know you; you are a pawnbroker. You may go down."

Mr. Farebrother presented an appearance the most opposite that it is possible to imagine to that of his club-fellow, Mr. Higgins. He was a small, thin, narrow-made man; with a coat of good quality, but originally constructed for a much more considerable person than himself. Indeed, he seemed to have a strong desire to be at room in his clothes, for the slate-coloured trousers with which his nether man was ornamented, lapped vaguely over his shoes behind; which, if the stockings were in harmony with those shoes, might be, upon the whole, advantageous to him. His look was humble and sanctimonious, and, either from tenderness of heart or of eyes, he had a weeping look about him, which those who knew him believed to increase greatly under reiterated tumblers of brandy and water. We need not enter largely into the testimony which he gave; suffice it to say, he corroborated, in every point, the testimony of Mr. Higgins, and the story of Bill Jones.

The magistrate, as a matter of form, asked him some shrewd, sensible questions, premising them, however, by saying, in a low voice, to Colonel Lieberg, "You wont convict him; the thing is too well got up."

Mr. Farebrother resisted manfully every attempt to wring the truth from him; he had more than once been under the hands of Mister afterwards Baron Garrow, and, consequently, there was not an art by which a witness can be made to forget or betray himself, that he was not thoroughly acquainted with, and ready to resist. Having terminated his examination, the magistrate turned to the accuser, with a silent smile, as if asking—"What am I to do next?"

"I certainly thought I was sure of the identity," said Lieberg, "and, accordingly, swore to the fact; but, after what we have heard, I suppose the matter must be given up."

The magistrate accordingly dismissed the charge; but Bill Jones, who stood upon character, seemed resolved to have the last word: "I hope, your worship," he observed, "that I quit this bar with honour."

"Pooh! nonsense!" said the magistrate. "Go along;" and the worthy gentleman slunk out of court, like a dog, under the influence of fear. Lieberg and Ernstein took leave, and departed also, followed, a step behind, by R——, the officer, who had been standing near the prisoner during the whole time.

"I beg your pardon, Colonel," he said, as soon as they got into the passage; "but I sha'n't be able to come up to you, to-day, so here's your box;" and he pulled out of his pocket, and presented to Lieberg, the splendid box, of which he had been robbed the night before. "The men will expect you to stand something, sir," he said; "but I'll do what's right, and let you know what it comes to to-morrow."

"Do, do!" replied Lieberg. "But, harkye, R——, here's a young friend of mine who wishes to become acquainted with what is going on in all stations in society. Could you not give him a little insight into the lives of such gentry as we have just seen?"

"Lord bless you!—yes, sir," cried R——; "I will introduce him to them all, if he likes; but, you know, sir, there's a proverb about touching pitch."

"If there's any danger in it," said Lieberg, "of course he had better not."

"Oh, no danger in life, sir!" replied R——, "as I will manage for him; but he had better mind his watch, and his purse, and all that; or leave them at home. The gentleman, I take it, wants a lark; and if that's the case, he can have it; but it may cost him something, perhaps."

"It is not exactly a 'lark,' as you term it," replied Morley, in a more serious and sedate tone than the officer had expected from his years; "as my friend has told you, I want to see something of the mode of life of these people, as well as others."

"Oh! you are a flosofer, sir—are you?" said R——, "or, perhaps, a flantrofist! Well, sir, there's no reason why you shouldn't. It may cost a pound in lush, or what not; but as for your being safe, make your mind at ease about that; they know me too well to meddle with you. I wouldn't introduce you to any of that sort of fellows. Why, you know, sir, there are only two kind of people that set about regularly committing a murder. First of all, there's the fellow that knows he is well-nigh up to the mark; he gets not to care what he does, and takes his chance of one thing or another. Those are the old, bad hands, that have been at every kind of thing for many a long year, and having got down low, are not able to keep upon the quiet lay, but must make some grand stroke to set them up altogether, or send them to the drop. Then there are others, sir, that do it unaccountably—men that haven't been half so bad as some others, who seem to take it into their head all of a sudden; those are the fellows that give us the greatest trouble, for we are not up to them; and sometimes we may be a week or ten days before we find out who has done it. But I wont put you in the way of anything that is dangerous. The best thing I can do for you, is, to make you acquainted with Master Higgins, there; you'll find him a very gentlemanly sort of man, and as he lost, I suppose, a matter of three or four pound upon this snuff-box, it is but right to be civil to him. I could take you over there, sir, where they have gone to talk of the affair; but I think you had better let me bring him to you to-night, and then you can settle the matter together."

This plan was accordingly agreed upon; Morley gave his address to the officer, and as soon as it was dark R—— entered the young gentleman's sitting-room, in Berkeley-square.

"Oh, you are alone, sir, are you?" said he.

"Yes," replied Ernstein. "Have you not brought your friend with you?"

"Oh, yes," replied R——; "but I have left him behind, there, in the passage, talking with your servant, sir; for I thought you might have somebody with you, and might not like to have him seen."

Morley smiled at the officer's estimates of respectability; but he merely replied, "Is he so well known, then?"

"Oh, yes, sir; he is well known enough," said R——; "especially amongst us. However, as a hood for what he was coming about, he brought something to offer you for sale, as if he were a regular tradesman."

"Which, I suppose, he expects me to buy," said Morley, "as the price of his favour and protection."

"Oh, no, sir," answered R——; "you need not buy anything, unless you like. He is always sure to get his market—it is the price that he takes the things at which he makes by."

"Well! bring him in, then," said Morley, "and we will talk about the matter afterwards."

Mr. Higgins was speedily introduced, and, as he entered, gave a rapid, but very marking, glance round the whole room. It is probable, that there was not a table, chair, or piece of china, down to the coffee cup and saucer with which Morley was engaged when he entered, that he would not have known again, had it been brought to pawn at his shop. Mr. Higgins made a low bow to the inhabitant of the apartment, after he had remarked upon the other things which it contained, and, seeing that Morley was making as keen an investigation of his person as he himself ever had made of any object for sale or pledge offered to him by the children of vice and misery with whom he had generally to deal, he thought fit to begin the conversation first, and cut short a scrutiny of which he was not fond.

"Mr. R—— has done me the honour, sir," he began, in very tolerable language, "of bringing me here, because, he said you wished to see some little things in my way;" and having uttered this very equivocal sentence, he held his tongue, and left Morley to take it up in what sense he chose.

Morley was amused, but he replied in such a manner as still to leave the task of explanation to the other.

"I am very much obliged to Mr. R——," he said. "Pray, what have you got to show me?"

The man grinned, to find that the young gentleman could deal in equivoques, as well as himself. Ere he answered, he gave an approving wink of the eye to the officer, which might have been translated, perhaps—"He is not a fool, after all, though he is a gentleman." However, he would not be brought to the point; and putting his hand in his pocket, he produced a small shagreen case, which he opened, and laid on the table before Morley Ernstein; displaying to the wondering eyes of the young baronet, a pair of very beautiful diamond ear-rings. Morley gazed at them for a moment or two, in no small surprise.

"They are very handsome, indeed," he said, at length—"they are very handsome, indeed, as far as I am any judge of such things; but, pray, what do you intend me to do with these?"

"To buy them, sir," replied the man, quite coolly.

"I hope not to wear them, too," said Morley, "for that I shall scarcely consent to."

"O no, sir!" answered Mr. Higgins, laughing; "but such gentlemen as you are always wanting diamond ear-rings. Why, there isn't one of all those ladies that you want to make a present to, who would not say they are as handsome a pair as ever were seen. I will let you have them a great bargain, too. Why, Lord ——'s young lady sold me a pair, the other day, for twice the money, which he had given her only two days before."

"A pleasant comment on such sort of connections," thought Morley Ernstein; but he answered, aloud—"There is one objection to my taking these, even if I did want them, my good friend—namely, that I do not exactly know where they may come from."

The man paused, and stared in his face for a moment.

"Ha, now I take you, sir—now I take you!" he cried, at length. "But I can assure you, you are mistaken; they are not exactly mine. I am disposing of them for another party; but I think if you knew what an act of charity you are doing in buying them, you would give the full money willingly enough, and perhaps something into the bargain."

"Indeed!" said Morley, with his curiosity somewhat excited; "pray who do they belong to?"

"Oh, as nice a young lady, sir, as ever lived!" replied the man. "Her father was a clergyman, and her mother a lady of good fortune, and amongst the tip-top of the world; but there was a law-suit about the mother's fortune, to whom these ear-rings belonged, I have heard, and that ruined her husband, and broke her heart. She died first, and the parson not long after; and they left this daughter and a boy, who is a wild one, with about a couple of hundred between them, and some nick-nacks. Well, the boy soon got through his money, and his sister's too; and from time to time he came to me, with a lot of things to sell. His sister, he let out the other day, had kept him and herself too by teaching; but now she hasn't had much to do for some time, because she fell ill in the winter, and so lost her pupils. They are well-nigh starving, the boy tells me, and in the end she is driven to sell her mother's ear-rings. She only asks forty pounds for them, sir—I think they are worth a hundred."

The story had every appearance of truth about it to the mind of Morley Ernstein. Such things were very likely to happen; and the man told it, too, like a true story. After asking why Mr. Higgins did not buy the diamonds himself, and receiving the satisfactory answer, that he had bought just such a pair before from Lord ——'s young lady, and could not afford to buy two, as well as having received truth-like replies to one or two other questions, Morley made up his mind somewhat precipitately to do three things; to purchase the ear-rings, to find out the brother, and to see if, through him, he could not do something for the sister.

"Pray where does this young man live?" he said, after having concluded the purchase; "do you think he will have any objection to speak with me about his affairs?"

"Oh, not he, sir!" cried the man; "the young scamp don't mind talking about them to the whole world. He's no shame left! He lives at No. 3, Dover-street, New-road, and his sister too. A prettier girl I never saw, in all the course of my life, for I went there one day."

Morley put down the address; and having dismissed this subject, and arranged to make an expedition with the worthy Mr. Higgins, into some of the most reputable resorts of rogues and vagabonds, on the succeeding night, he suffered him and R—— to depart, waiting with some impatience for the following morning, when he proposed to put his Quixotic purpose, regarding the sellers of the diamond ear-rings, into execution.

When the officer and Higgins were on the pavement of Berkeley-square, the former whistled three bars of an air as popular in its day as the elegant tune of Jim Crow has been within our own recollection. These bars were whistled with emphasis, which ought in all grammars to be considered as an additional part of speech, adding more significance to a sentence than either noun or verb. Higgins seemed to understand perfectly well what he meant, and said, in a tone of reply—

"He wants to see life, Master R——. We'll show it him, wont we? His old servant told me that he was a tender-hearted young gentleman, and did a world of good in his own parish!"

CHAPTER VIII.

HELEN BARHAM.

MORLEY ERNSTEIN made all sorts of good resolutions—that is to say, not virtuous resolutions, because, as yet, there was no temptation for him to be otherwise; but worldly good resolutions—the resolutions of prudence, propriety, economy. In short, all those sort of resolutions which one makes when one has fixed upon a certain line of conduct, from feeling rather than from judgment, and wish to enchain our purpose in its execution, by the exercise of that very power whose sway we have cast off. Morley Ernstein resolved, then, that he would inquire into all the facts with the most scrupulous accuracy; that he would not assist this young man and his sister beyond a certain point; that he would not assist the youth at all, unless he found that there were hopes of amendment; and that, should such not be the case, he would employ the intervention of Mr. Hamilton to give aid to the young lady. No one on earth can doubt that these were all very prudent resolutions. If he had been forty, he could not have been more reasonable, though, probably, if he had been forty, he never would have formed them. But resolutions are always the sport of accident, and however harsh and hard it may be to say, yet I fear it is nevertheless true, that the course of conduct which needs to be guarded with such scrupulous care, had better never to be entered upon at all.

To return to Morley Ernstein. At the hour of

eleven, his new cabriolet, which the poetical coachmaker had assured him would roll over the pavement like a cloud through the sky, and one of his new horses, which, if the same figurative personage had beheld him, would most likely have been compared to the wind impelling the cloud, were at the door of the hotel, together with a groom upon the most approved scale, bearing gloves as white as the Horse Guards', and the usual neat, but unaccountable sort of clothing, called leather breeches and top-boots. Morley Ernstein descended with a slow step, entered his cabriolet thoughtfully, and drove towards the house to which he had been addressed, not going above a mile out of his way, in consequence of his ignorance of all those narrow turnings and windings which a professed London coachman is fond of taking. The street was a small one, and evidently a poor one, but Morley Ernstein had expected nothing else, and the house was neat and clean, with a white door-step, a clean door, and a small brass knocker. The young gentleman's groom, by his directions, applied his hand to the implement of noise, and produced a roll of repeated knocks, which, in any other country, would be held as a nuisance. A few minutes after, a neat maid-servant presented herself, and, in answer to the question, "Is Mr. William Barham at home?" replied in the affirmative.

Morley Ernstein then descended, gave his name, and was ushered up a flight of stairs, having a centre line of neat stair carpet, not much wider than one's hand. The drawing-room into which he was shown was very nicely furnished with a number of little ornaments, not indeed of the kind that could be purchased, but of the sort which a dexterous and tasteful female hand can produce, to trick out and decorate the simplest habitation. There was a small piano in one corner of the room, a Spanish guitar, with a blue ribbon, lying on the sofa, a pile of music on the top of the piano, some very well executed landscapes lying, half finished, on the table, together with a box of colours, and a glass of water. All, in short, bespoke taste and skill, and that graceful occupation of leisure hours, which is so seldom found uncombined with a fine mind.

The room was empty of human beings, and while Morley was making his survey, he heard the maid-servant run up-stairs to another flight, and say—"Master William—Master William, there is a gentleman below in the drawing-room wishes to speak to you."

There was no reply; and after some running about, the girl returned to say, that Master William had gone out without her knowing it. As she spoke, however, there was a knock at the door, and, exclaiming, "Oh! there he is!" she ran down to open it.

Morley Ernstein remained in the middle of the drawing-room, with the door partly unclosed, so as to allow him to hear the murmur of voices in the passage below, and the moment after some light footsteps ascending the stairs. They were not the steps of a man, and ere he could ask himself, "What next?" the door of the room opened wide, and a young lady entered the room, whose appearance answered too well the description which had been given, for him to doubt that she was the late possessor of the diamond ear-rings.

She seemed to be about nineteen; and, both in features and figure, was exceedingly beautiful. Dressed in mourning, there could be no bright colours in her apparel, but every garment was so arranged as tastefully to suit the other; and the whole was in the very best style, if not absolutely from the hands of the most fashionable dress-maker. Yet all was plain—there was nothing at all superfluous; and, indeed, her beauty required it not. The luxuriant dark hair clustered under the close bonnet, and contrasted finely with the pure, fair skin, warmed by a bright blush, like that of a rose, which one could hardly believe that the air of London would leave long unwithered. The large and dark, but soft eyes, spoke mind and feeling too; though there was an occasional flash of brightness in them, which seemed to say, that mirth had not always been so completely banished as it seemed at this moment. The whole face looked but the more lovely from the darkness of her garb; and the beautiful small foot and ankle were certainly not displayed to disadvantage in the tight-fitting black silk stockings and well-made shoe. She bowed distantly to Morley, as she entered the room, with a look that expressed no sort of pleasure, adding—"The servant tells me, sir, that you wish to see my brother. He will be here in five minutes; for I left him only at a little distance, at a shop where he wanted to purchase something. Will you not sit down?"

She pointed coldly to a chair, and as she spoke, began removing the drawings from the table; but Morley replied—"Perhaps I had better return again; I fear I interrupt you."

The lady looked up with an air of hesitation.

"Indeed, sir," she said, after a moment's pause, "I do not know well how to reply to you. My brother will be angry, perhaps, if I say what I think, and yet——"

Morley was not a little surprised at this unfinished reply, and he answered, with interest, which, it is not to be denied, was increasing every moment under all he heard and saw—

"Pray explain yourself, madam. I think you must be under some mistake; but at all events, your brother cannot be made angry by what you say; for of course, unless you desire it, I shall never repeat it to him, or to any one."

"Well then, sir," she said gravely and sadly, "I was going to say, however rude and harsh you may think it, that I certainly would rather that you did not wait for my brother, and cannot but hope that he may be absent also when you come again."

Morley smiled at this very strange reception, but still he could not help thinking that there was some mistake. "Indeed, Miss Barham," he replied, "this is so unexpected and extraordinary, that I rather believe you are in error regarding me."

"Oh, no!" replied the lady in the same tone; "his description, sir, was very accurate. Are you not Mr. Neville?"

"Oh, no!" answered Morley, with a smile, "my name is Morley Ernstein, and I came with a view of doing your brother good and not harm."

"Ernstein!" she cried, starting with a wild look of joy and satisfaction. "Morley Ernstein! Oh! then you are the gentleman whose name was to the draft! It was you who bought the diamonds, then; but my brother told me he had not seen you—that it was through a third person—" and she blushed deeply as she spoke.

"He said true, Miss Barham," replied Morley; "it was through another person, but from that other person I learnt something of your own and your brother's situation, in explanation of the cause for which the diamonds were sold."

"Oh! they should not have told all that!" murmured the young lady. "How did they know it? It was sad enough to sell them at all!" and her eyes filled with tears.

"I made the inquiry," said Morley; "and came here, believe me, without any intention of obtruding myself upon your confidence, but simply with the intention of seeing your brother, and ascertaining whether anything could be done for him. But now I am here," he added, "may I venture to ask who is this Mr. Neville for whom you took me? I hope I do not presume too far."

"O no, sir," she answered, with a faint smile, accompanied by another deep blush—"if you were aware, sir, of all that you have done by giving that sum for the ear-rings, you would feel that you have a claim to ask such a question. I do not know this Mr. Neville; my brother says he is a man of fortune, but I do not believe it. I know, however, that he has led William into sad extravagance, that he and his companions have ruined him, and that William has ruined me, leaving me literally destitute, till your kindly taking those trinkets at a price I am afraid too high, has set me free from the difficulty that pressed upon me."

It may well be believed, that a young man of one-and-twenty, with a heart not the coldest in the world, began to feel some sensations of satisfaction at having met with the sister rather than the brother, notwithstanding all the good resolutions he had previously made.

"I have the ear-rings with me now," said Morley; "you will easily understand that I had no object in buying such things but to afford a little assistance where it seemed needful. I am aware that it has caused you much pain to part with these jewels. You must take them again, and keep the money as a loan, till such time as it is quite convenient for you or your brother to pay me;" and taking out of his pocket the little case which he had previously sealed up, he offered to return it.

The fair girl drew back, however, though not without a look of pleasure.

"Oh, no!" she answered, "I cannot take them. You must excuse me—I do not borrow money of—of——"

"Of a stranger you would say," said Morley. "But surely, Miss Barham, that objection may soon cure itself. When you know me better——"

"Ah, then," she replied, "perhaps I might feel differently; but now, I cannot, indeed—besides, if my brother knew——"

"Would he be angry?" demanded Morley, thinking, if such were the case, the youth would be more scrupulous than had been represented.

"Oh, no!" answered the young lady; "but he would think—he would—he would—I cannot explain myself," she added. "But before he comes, let me express my deep sense of your generosity and kindness, sir. It is what one so seldom meets with, that it touches me the more."

"Nay, then," said Morley, "show that you do not reject it by keeping these trinkets. I have no use for them—I can do nothing with them; the money that I gave will never even be missed in my banker's account; and as I said before, you or your brother can pay me when you can find it convenient. My object in coming here to-day," he added, "was to see what could be done for him; and, as I was prepared to find him somewhat wild and thoughtless, what you have said concerning him has not surprised me. If I can befriend him, however, I will; but whatever may result from this visit between him and me, let me, at all events, be considered as a friend by you, Miss Barham."

"You have acted like one, indeed, this day!" she answered, with the tears rising in her eyes.

"Well, then," said Morley, "as the first proof that you regard me as such, take these things back: they only embarrass me."

As he spoke, there was another loud knock at the door, and before the quick step, which was instantly heard on the staircase, had reached the room, Morley had placed the little case in Miss Barham's hand, and she had received it with evident confusion and hesitation. The next moment the door opened wide, and a young man, scarcely of eighteen years of age, entered quickly, with his long and shining, but somewhat dishevelled hair, tossed loosely about a face, quick and intelligent enough, but bearing an expression both wild and cunning. His complexion was very different from that of his sister, for he was very pale and sallow, and there was a certain look of premature dissipation about him, which is not easily to be mistaken.

"Here is Neville, Helen!" he exclaimed, as he entered; but the instant his eyes lighted upon Morley Ernstein, he started, and looked both surprised and annoyed.

Ere anything more could pass, however, a slower step was heard mounting the staircase, and through the door, which the youth had left open behind him, appeared a fashionably-dressed man coming up with an air of easy nonchalance, as if he were entering the abode of people very much below him, looking at his boot, which he tapped occasionally with his cane, and not raising his eyes in the slightest degree towards the drawing-room—though the door, as I have said, was open—till he was upon the very threshold. When he did look up, however, and saw the figure of Morley Ernstein standing exactly opposite to him, he started, with an appearance of even greater surprise than had been shown by the brother of Miss Barham; and at the same time his brow contracted, and his eye flashed, in a way that he seemed to think very imposing, for it was evident that his whole demeanour had much preparation in it.

Morley, in the mean time, could hardly suppress a smile, at seeing the man for whom he had been mistaken, and who had been described

as so much like himself. This Mr. Neville was certainly not less than fifteen or sixteen years older; he was shorter, too, by two or three inches, not nearly so powerful in make, and though dressed in the very extreme of the fashion, which, in that day, was somewhat extravagant in itself, he wanted that easy tone and indescribable grace that marks the gentleman, both in mind and in station.

The feelings of Miss Barham, however, were evidently anything but pleasant, and it was with some satisfaction that Morley saw her draw in a slight degree nearer to himself, as her brother and his companion entered. All the parties gazed upon each other for a moment in silence; but the very first words which were spoken, and which proceeded from the lips of Mr. Neville, at once showed Morley that the fable of the borrowed plumes might be acted in real life. "I say, Barham!" he exclaimed—"what is all this, my boy?"

Morley might perhaps have felt himself a little awkward at being found alone with Miss Barham, by any high-toned man of his own class; it might have produced an instant shyness—an uncertainty as to whether he should explain the circumstance or not; but the words, the manner, and the voice of the worthy who now entered, at once set him at his ease.

"Mr. Barham," he said, "I called here to speak a few words to you, but as I find you are occupied, I shall take another opportunity."

"And pray, sir, who may you be?" demanded Mr. Neville, not suffering the young man to reply.

"I really do not know, sir," said Morley Ernstein, looking at him from head to foot, with a contemptuous air, "why I should answer you any questions, until I know who it is that presumes to put them to me."

"My name is Neville, sir—my name is Neville," exclaimed the other; "have you anything to say to that?"

"Nothing at all, sir," replied Morley, "as my business does not lie with Mr. Neville, but with Mr. Barham."

"But I am Mr. Barham's friend, sir," said Mr. Neville, "and he does not seem to know you any more than I do. I am Mr. Barham's friend, I say."

"I am very sorry to hear it," replied Morley, calmly, though provoked; "for, from all I can see, your acquaintance does not seem likely to be advantageous to him."

"Oh, sir! oh!" exclaimed the other, with a furious look—"now, I insist upon having your card. I will have satisfaction, sir—I will have satisfaction."

"Nay, my dear young lady," said Morley, gently passing Miss Barham, who was endeavouring to interpose; "I understand this gentleman, and you do not.—I never give my card, sir, to people that I do not know. If you are the sort of person I take you to be, such satisfaction as a horsewhip may give, you shall command. If you be not such a personage, and prove the fact to my conviction, I will either make you an apology, or meet you in the way that you require. Stand out of the way, sir, for I am very likely, at this moment, to throw you from the top of the stairs to the bottom. Mr. Barham, I much wish to have a few words of conversation with you, and if you could make it convenient to call upon me to night, at Thomas's, in Berkeley-square, towards seven o'clock, I should be glad to see you. You will ask for Sir Morley Ernstein. Miss Barham, I shall have the honour of paying my respects to you on another occasion."

"Missed fire, by Jove!"—exclaimed Mr. Neville, as Morley descended the stairs, opened the door, and beckoned to his cabriolet, which was wandering up and down the street—"I say, what's to be done now? That bird's worth plucking, and you are a fool if you don't do it. I must have a feather, too, if it can be managed—but pray introduce me to your sister. Miss Barham, how do you do?"

Miss Barham drew back. "I must beg to decline the introduction, sir," she said; "I have no inclination to make your acquaintance; I told William so, this morning, and he might have saved me the pain of seeing you here, as his only pretext was an appointment to meet you, and it seems that you had joined each other before you came in."

"Hey! how is this, Barham?" exclaimed the other; "I thought you had talked to her about it all."

"So I did," replied William Barham; "but she is foolish. I tell you what, Helen; this wont do—you don't know what you are about; and it is all nonsense, too, because you have often told me about such things that——"

"It will so far do, William," replied Helen Barham, interrupting him, "that I will beg you will leave me my rooms to myself. If you do not, I must take means to free myself from society I do not like."

Thus saying, she passed through the door leading into another chamber, and was heard to lock it behind her.

"Leave me with her, Neville," said her brother—"leave me with her; I will bring her to, and will join you in an hour at Williams's."

"Well, mind you!" cried the other, somewhat sternly—"remember, my lad, I have got my thumb upon you!" and uttering these words, Mr. Neville marched out of the room. As soon as the door of the house closed upon him, the youth knocked gently at that of his sister's room. "Helen!" he exclaimed; "Helen!—he is gone. Do come out and speak to me, there is a dear girl!"

Helen Barham did come out; but her eyes were red with tears. "Oh, William!" she said, "I wonder you are not ashamed to see me——"

"Nonsense, Helen," he cried, "I have often heard you laugh at idle prejudices."

"Fie—fie!" she continued, not attending to him; "to wish to sell your sister to such a being as that! I did say that there is nothing I would not do to save you from destruction, but—oh! William——"

"Well, then, Helen," he said, "this is the only way of saving me from destruction."

"Not now, William," she exclaimed, "not now! The money which you got for the earrings will do for some time, surely; and before

that is spent, I may get some other means of keeping myself and you."

"You will never get enough to keep us comfortably," replied the youth; "and as to that, it does not matter whether you do or not; I tell you, the only way to save me from destruction is——"

"Is by my own, you would say," replied his sister.

"Stuff and nonsense!" answered her brother; "they never hang people for that, Helen; and I tell you, that man could hang me, or very near it, if he chose."

The face of Helen Barham turned as pale as death, and she sank into a chair without any reply, gazing in her brother's countenance, with silent agony, for several moments.

"It is true, Helen," said her brother, doggedly, and setting his teeth hard, "it is true what I tell you."

"Whoever heard of such horror!" exclaimed Helen Barham. "The brother would sell his sister to be the mistress of a low-bred, horrible villain; and that villain would hang the brother, if the sister will not consent to her own destruction. Is that it, William?"

"Not exactly," replied the youth; "you twist the matter which way you please, Helen. I said he could hang me if he liked, not that he would; and as for the rest, Helen, I don't sell you. I only want you to do the best for yourself, and for me too. You can never get enough by teaching, to keep me or you either. You are fond enough of fine clothes, I can tell you; and here's a man will give you as many as you want. He will settle five hundred a-year on you, just as if you were his wife. He can't marry you, you know, because he is married already."

"Hush! hush! hush!" cried Helen Barham, stopping her ears—"hush! and leave me. Do not make me hate myself! What did I ever say, William, to make you think that I would become any man's mistress for fine clothes?"

"No," replied her brother, "but I have heard you say that marriage is love; that a man and woman who have promised themselves to each other, ought to consider themselves just as much married as if all the ceremonies in the world had passed between them."

Helen hid her eyes in her hands, saying, "I have been very foolish, William, and I have talked wildly; but you have misunderstood me—sadly, too. I meant, that they had never a right to break that promise. Love!—can you talk to me of love with such a man as that?"

"Why, I suppose, then, you are in love with the other I found here," said her brother. "Pray what was he doing here with you alone?—What is it he wants with me, too?"

"He wants," exclaimed Helen, her face brightening up with renewed hope—"he wants to save you, William; he wants to aid you—to deliver you, if you will let him. Go to him, William—go to him; tell him the whole—tell him all the truth, and, I am sure, if it be in the power of man to help you, he will. He is generous and kind; and came here for the purpose of assisting you; he came not to see me; but the man from whom he bought the diamonds told him something about you, and he came on purpose to offer you aid."

"That old fool, Higgins, has made a blunder," said the youth, thoughtfully; "I'll go and call upon him, Helen, and see if anything can be got out of him; but, as to telling him the whole, you do not think me such a fool, do you, to put my neck in two men's power, because it happens to be in that of one? You seem to be mightily smitten with him, Helen; and perhaps might not object to the arrangement there, eh? But, I'll tell you what—that won't do, my lady. Neville's the man, depend upon it; and I insist that you treat him civilly, at least. For to-day, I must quiet matters down as well as I can, but to-morrow I shall bring him here to tea."

Helen Barham again burst into tears, and in that state the youth left her. But ere half an hour was over, Mr. Neville was again in the house, and, passing by the maid, he entered the drawing-room unannounced, saying, he "only wanted to speak two words to Miss Barham." He certainly was not long with her, and what he said was in a low tone, for the maid, who was not at all inquisitive, could not catch the words through the keyhole of the door. In less than a minute and a half, he quitted the house again, and the maid looked at him from the parlour-window, as he mounted a beautiful horse and rode away. The moment after, she heard something heavy fall in the room above, and, running up, found Helen Barham lying senseless on the floor.

CHAPTER IX.

VILLAINY.

I AM not fond of scenes of low vice; I love not to dwell upon them. Although in endeavouring to form for myself a just estimate of human nature, to learn, for the sake of comparing them, the effects produced upon the mind of man by every station of life, and every earthly pursuit, I have visited the haunts of the low and the guilty, and mingled, for a brief season, with the profligate, the criminal, and the base, in many of the countries that my feet have trod, yet I look back upon such moments, and such scenes, as a physician may be supposed to look back upon the lazar-house and the plague-hospital, whither he has gone for instruction, but which he recollects with horror and with pain.

The character of Morley Ernstein, as I have before depicted it, will enable the reader to judge easily of the feelings with which he visited, in company with Mr. Higgins, one of the nocturnal meetings of a body of notorious criminals. The eager and impetuous part of his nature was, for the time, predominant; and the spirit of adventure which the act implied, heightened by a change of dress, with which the worthy pawnbroker had furnished him, and the novelty of the whole scene, made him feel amused rather than otherwise, and caused him to forget altogether the more painful aspect of that which was before his eyes.

I will not dwell upon all that took place, though, for reasons which will be seen hereafter,

it is necessary to touch upon these events in some degree. Suffice it to say, that Mr. Higgins introduced his young friend, pledged himself for his *honesty*, and bestowed such commendations upon him as the society and the circumstances required. Morley, not very many years before, had been at a public school, where, amongst other branches of learning, nothing is acquired more thoroughly than the art of making one's way in every sort of male society. On this occasion he gave himself up to the impulse of the moment, and, without affecting to talk their slang, or imitate their manners, he soon found himself highly popular amongst the ruffians by whom he was surrounded. There was a blithe jollity about them, which, probably, nothing but utter recklessness of all that others hold dear could produce; and one of the men in particular, whom the rest called Harry Martin, had a gay, good-humoured frankness; a daring, insolent, but cheerful merriment, which Morley could very well conceive might prove not a little engaging to persons of his own class. Martin also seemed struck and amused with Morley, laughed with him, talked with him, tried to make him drink, and, not being successful, had many a joke at his puny habits, even while he evidently admired his self-command.

After having remained with these men for about an hour, Morley perceived a note brought in, or rather a scrap of paper, for it was not doubled up into the form of a letter, which, being handed to Harry Martin, he replied—"Oh, very well;" and pushed it over to Higgins. A momentary consultation ensued, and then a youth of about two or three and twenty was singled out, and placed at the top of the table, when Martin, pulling out a handsome gold watch, remarked, aloud—

"It is now half-past nine, gentlemen; and this is our friend, Billy Barham."

Morley Ernstein stared. Although the name was similar, there was not the least resemblance in the world, between the Billy Barham before his eyes, and the William Barham whom he had seen in the morning. However, everything went on as before; Billy Barham laughing, drinking, and talking with the rest, and his friends around always taking especial care to address him by his two names.

After a certain space of time, Morley found the scene begin to grow tiresome. It was not exactly what he had expected; there was less distinctive character about it than he had imagined he should find; very little, indeed, to bring away, or which could bear in any degree upon views of philosophy, or serve the purposes of instruction. He accordingly gave Higgins, who sat next to him, the signal that had been agreed upon, as indicating his wish to depart.

"Stay a bit, sir," whispered Higgins—"stay a bit. We mustn't go yet, the time's not up."

Morley accordingly remained, till Higgins informed him that they might go, adding, in the same low tone—"You'll pay for the lush, I suppose."

"Oh, yes!" replied Morley; but, upon putting his hand into his pocket, where he had left a few sovereigns for accidental expenses, he found that they had disappeared. He uttered not a word, however, in regard to his suspicions, though he saw the eyes of Higgins, Martin, and one or two others upon him at the moment.

"Come, Mr. Higgins," he said, "you know me well enough to trust me. You pay the reckoning for us all, for I have forgot to bring any money."

"That's a hearty, now!" cried Martin, tossing down the sovereigns upon the table—"they've been handed up to me; but I wouldn't take them from such a fellow for my little finger."

"Well then," said Morley, leaving them on the table—"let all that is over the reckoning be spent by the party, and so good night to you all."

"We'll drink your health, sir!" cried one of the persons present, and with such benediction, Morley and Higgins were suffered to depart.

"And now, Mr. Higgins," said Morley, as, after threading a great number of narrow streets, they entered King Street, Covent Garden—"pray tell me, was that young man's name—I mean the one they took up to the top of the table—really William Barham, as well as the youth you mentioned to me yesterday?"

"Lord bless you!—no, sir," replied Higgins, "no more than yours!"

"Then, why did they call him so?" demanded Morley Ernstein.

"Why, that's a bit of a secret, sir," replied Higgins; "but, however, I don't mind telling you; and now, let me see how I can manage to make you understand. You know something of an alibi already, I think, sir. Well, you see, many a good witness might be caught tripping, if he were to come into court with a story told him by another: and so, when we know that any one is upon the lay, or have notice given us that something's going on, where such and such men that we know may chance to put themselves in need of an alibi, we call one or two of the fellows present, by the names of the men that are out, and talk to them all night as such. Then every man that is there present, can swear with a safe conscience, that he saw Billy Barham, or any one else, at this house or that, and he can swear to the place, and name what was said, and be quite sure that if any one else is called he will swear to the same likewise; so that there can be no contradicting oneself or one another. That's the way we get up an alibi. So, you see, to-night some one sent in to say that Billy Barham was out upon some job; and though he did not tell us himself, we did the thing just out of kindness to him, because he's a young hand. But it won't do, sir; he'll get pulled up some of these days! He is going it a great deal too fast."

"I should think so, indeed," said Morley; "and, pray, Mr. Higgins, who is a personage named Neville?"

"Oh, sir," replied Higgins, "Neville was what we call a *prime swell;* he's getting a little bit down now, but I can recollect the time when his line of business was altogether on the race-course, and at certain houses in the neighbourhood of St. James's. Then he took to getting money by lending it, and as long as he kept to pianoforte selling, and all that, it did very well; but he was fool enough to let a story get into the

papers, about his filching some bills, and though the serjeant cleared him of that cleverly, it blowed him a great deal. Then he got horse-whipped one day, and showed a little bit of the white feather, and that did him no good with any party. But, if you are asking because of what happened this morning, I can put you up to all that in no time."

"Indeed!" said Morley. "Then you have heard all about this morning's business, it seems."

"To be sure!" replied Higgins. "The stupid young fool came to me to-night, about six o'clock, or so, and told me the whole; so I showed him that Neville would never do for his sister, and told him what I wanted to make up for her. I said to him, there's Sir Morley Ernstein, he may do very well, if you like, and what he promises he'll keep; but as for Neville, he may have a hundred pounds in his pocket to-day, and not two-pence to-morrow; and as for his doing what he says he will, even when he can, there's no use in trusting to that. We know him well enough—Master Neville. He's not a man of honour, sir."

A new light was beginning to shine upon Morley Ernstein; he was now, indeed, seeing human existence under a fresh aspect; he was too young to be suspicious, but yet he had heard a good deal of the world, if he had not mingled with it much; and the horrible scheme of villainy and vice, of which the reader is already aware, but which now first broke upon him, made him ask himself, which were the agents, which the victims, in the sad affair wherein he had himself become so suddenly and unexpectedly a participator? or, was he alone the object of this nefarious arrangement? Was Helen Barham, beautiful and high-minded as she seemed, but a light woman, seeking for some new paramour; or was she in reality what she appeared, and a mere victim to be immolated by the criminal selfishness of her brother? He paused then, for several minutes, without making any answer; he was, in fact, putting on his armour, if one may so call it, finding himself suddenly attacked in a manner that he did not expect. Accordingly, after some silence, he replied, "Well, Mr. Higgins, I think you spoke quite reasonably. She is a very beautiful girl, certainly. Pray, who did she live with last?"

"No, sir; no," said Mr. Higgins, with more warmth than Morley had expected. "She never lived with anybody that I know of—no, I'm sure she hasn't—but I'll tell you the plain truth of the matter. I have been given to understand, that you are a gentleman that wants to see life; now you know very well, sir, that young gentlemen that set out upon that lay, make a point, in the first place, of picking up some lady. Well, sir, what I've got to say is no bad compliment to you, either. I had seen this youth—this William Barham—almost every day, for the last three or four months; and I had heard all about his sister from him, and how she had laboured to support him in his wild ways. Well, sir, I found that now, having pawned or sold everything he had in the world, and almost everything she had, too, and done a great many other things besides, which we won't talk about, he was determined to sell his sister at last to some one. So, sir, when I saw you, and heard you talk, I thought that you were one who, if you did take the young lady, would not treat her as some men do, but, if some time you liked to marry, and part with her, would provide for her handsomely. It was that made me put you up quietly to go into that house."

"A very hopeful scheme, indeed!" said Morley. "But it seems to me, my good friend, that this youth, who is, evidently, as hopeless a scapegrace as ever cut a purse, or trod the drop, has other views for his sister."

"Ay, sir; he's a bad one," answered Mr. Higgins. "He's one that will come to no good. He might have been in a very genteel way of business, if he had liked it, without any risk either; but there's no keeping him steady, and he's got into bad hands that don't care how soon they ruin the young man altogether, provided they screen themselves."

The moralizing vein of Mr. Higgins might, in some degree, have surprised Morley Ernstein, had he not thought that there was something equivocal in the good gentleman's expressions, and that, perhaps, what he termed a genteel way of business, might be neither more nor less than gambling, swindling, or thieving dexterously, and that the more dangerous courses to which he alluded, might only be crimes easy of detection. Mr. Higgins went on, however, after a moment's pause, saying—"I can't help thinking, that young scoundrel has got himself entangled with Neville, in a way that he'll not easily break through; Neville's got a string round his foot, I have a notion."

"I do not understand exactly what you mean," replied Morley.

"Why, I mean, sir," replied Higgins, "that the fellow has got Bill to do something which might swing him, if Neville were to 'peach. I don't know what it is, either; but I could soon know if I liked."

"Well, then," answered Morley, "I wish you would like, and let me know; and if ten pounds or so will get at the matter, I should not mind giving it, though you know very well that I would not use the information to the young man's harm."

"Oh, I understand, sir, what you want," replied Higgins, while at one comprehensive view he saw every possible use that a gentleman, situated as Sir Morley Ernstein was, could make of the intelligence he was desirous of obtaining; and, remaining perfectly satisfied that the object was to frustrate Neville, and at once to put brother and sister into his own power, he repeated, with greater emphasis than before,—"Oh, I understand, sir—I understand!"

"You will almost always find me, Mr. Higgins," said Morley, "at about six o'clock, when I come home to dress for dinner; and, of course, I need not say that I should like the information as soon as possible."

"You shall have it, sir—you shall have it," replied Higgins, "if not to-morrow night, for certain, the night after."

"So be it, then," replied Morley; "good night! Mr. Higgins;" and taking his way homeward, he left his worthy companion to pursue his path to the shop.

CHAPTER X.

A CHALLENGE.

At the hour of ten, on the following morning, Morley Ernstein sat at breakfast with his friend Lieberg. He had come thither in haste, but as his friend's servant was in the room, he had suffered the cup, the saucer, the plate, the knife and fork, and every usual implement of breakfast-eating, to be placed, before he touched upon the subject which had brought him thither at that hour of the morning. As soon as all was arranged, and Morley had scanned the whole of the beautiful china upon the table, each piece of which was worth a Jew's eye—as soon as the young gentleman himself had reached the middle term of his first cup of coffee—as soon as some very thin broiled ham, and some excellent caviare, looking like all the black eyes of a harem put together, had been handed round—as soon, in short, as the servant, having no pretext for staying longer, had retired from the room, Morley Ernstein threw an open note across to Colonel Lieberg, saying—"There, my dear Count, I have taken the liberty of referring my gallant correspondent to yourself, though I fear it may make you get up to-morrow an hour or two earlier than usual."

Lieberg read it, and smiled. "That will be exactly as you please, Ernstein," he replied. "Of course, you are aware that it is not the least necessary for you to fight that man, unless you like it."

"Oh, I will fight him, certainly!" replied Morley, "as a matter of course. Having told him I would horsewhip him, or something equivalent, I will not refuse to fight him, especially as he seems to have got a friend to stand by him."

"You mean this Captain Stallfed," said Lieberg, "who writes you the note? The greatest rascal in Europe, my dear Morley, except Neville himself! the one a common swindler, the other a blackleg, of the very lowest character. Nevertheless, I think you are very right, for several reasons. In the first place, every man should do a thing once or twice in his life, just to get over the novelty of it, and to see what it is like—a duel, as well as everything else. In the next place, having made up your mind to fight somebody, you could not choose anybody better to fire at than Neville. Whether you hit him or miss him, your conduct may well be regarded as philanthropical. If you kill him, the benefit to society at large will be immense; if you miss him, you restore to him a rag of that reputation which was never otherwise than in a very tattered condition, and of which there is not now a scrap left. Then, again, my dear Morley, as you are known to be a gentleman and a man of honour, and I am known to be a man of the world, with a tolerable portion of respectability also, your fighting Neville, with Stallfed for his second, will be considered as the surest proof that you are resolved to fight anybody and everybody that asks you, as nothing could justify such a proceeding except that resolution. This will have the effect of sparing you the chance of twenty duels in times to come; for, depend upon it, in this brave world of ours, the reputation of a readiness to fight keeps a man clear of a thousand petty insults and annoyances. There is one thing, however, which I very much doubt—namely, that these men will ever give us the meeting at all."

"That is their affair," answered Morley; "the honour of fighting this man, I can assure you, Lieberg, is not what I can desire; but, of course, one must either make up one's mind to meet a man, or set a great guard upon one's tongue towards him."

"I do not know that there is any 'or' in the question, Ernstein," replied Lieberg; "with such a man as this, indeed, there are twenty alternatives—kicking, horse-whipping, throwing out of the window, sending him to Marlborough-street. But with any other sort of person, there is nothing to be done but fighting when he asks you, for a man of courage and a gentleman."

"I differ with you, Lieberg," said Morley. "I can easily conceive, that the man who upon principle refuses to fight a person to whom he gave no reasonable cause for offence, may be both a man of courage and a gentleman; but the man who chooses to give rein to his tongue against another man, and then refuses to fight him, can be nothing but a coward; and, therefore, though this Mr. Neville be a scamp, I will not baulk him of his humour."

"You will sadly disappoint him," answered Lieberg; "for, depend upon it, he calculates upon your dislike to meet such a man as he is, and hopes to make something of it, either as a salve for a sore reputation, or a plaster for a broken purse. But come, Ernstein, pray explain to me, if there be no secret in it, how you were brought in contact with this very reputable personage. You really must have been making your way in the world."

Morley Ernstein found more difficulty in replying to Lieberg's question than he anticipated. Between one-and-twenty, and seven or eight-and-twenty, there is an extraordinary gap, a vaster space, at least in general, than is to be found betwixt any other two periods of life, with a similar interval of years. That gap is filled by the curious thing called experience—a sort of vapour, through which we see every object under a totally different aspect on the one side of the space and the other—a smoke, raised from the burning of a great bonfire, formed partly of certain weeds called hopes, enthusiasms, confidences, expectations, and partly of certain withered sticks, round which these weeds were accustomed to cling not ungracefully—called illusions. To the eyes on the one side of this gap—I mean the youthful one—a person standing on the other side seems so far off, that it is scarcely possible for them to reach the hand unto them; and such was the case with Morley Ernstein and Lieberg. That gap, and perhaps more, was between them, and Morley was afraid that Lieberg could not or would not understand him.

That part of the affair which related to Helen Barham he did not like to mention to one whose views were formed in a different school from his own. He knew not what might be Lieberg's

comments, what his inferences, what he might say, what he might suspect; and there is nothing that a young and high mind shrinks so timidly from as suspicion; it is the cowardice of a generous heart. As the matter was to be told, however, for he could not very well avoid it, he spoke with his wonted candour of the whole affair, related the manner in which the situation of Helen Barham and her brother had first been brought to his knowledge, his interview with her, and the subsequent conversation which he had had with good Mr. Higgins. But the demeanour of Lieberg was very different from that which he had expected. Not a smile appeared upon his lip which could have alarmed a heart the most sensible to ridicule; not a word passed from his tongue which could shock one feeling in Morley's breast. He listened in perfect silence, with his eyes bent gravely on the ground, and remained without answering for some moments after the other had done speaking.

"This is a curious and interesting history," he said, at length; "and has some of the strangest points in it that I know of. Many men in London, who practically know as much of its ways as I do, but who perhaps have not speculated upon them quite so philosophically as I have, at least, tried to do, would conclude that a story thus told to a young and inexperienced man of fortune, by a mere 'fence,' as they call such fellows as Higgins, must be a trumped-up tale for the purpose of cheating; the woman a loose woman, the boy a swindler, and the man Neville merely brought in to give greater effect to the scene. But I know better than this, Morley, and can very well conceive the whole story to be true. Those who see a great deal of London will find, if they do but take the trouble to investigate the matter impartially, that even in the innermost recesses of vice and iniquity, mingling with all that is wicked and bad in the very hearts of men given up to various sorts of crime, there are peculiar virtues, good qualities, bursts of feeling, touches of generosity, and even of truth, which lie, like the jewels of Golconda, diamonds amongst mud, or grow, like some of our most beautiful plants, from a soil formed of filth and corruption. Do not misunderstand me: I do not mean to make heroes of pickpockets and swindlers, forgers and housebreakers; but I mean to say, that in the very blackest of them there is some good point, some virtues carried to a high pitch—some which, perhaps I might say, are almost peculiar to the hearts of vice. Many a man who risks his life daily to take the money of another will give his own as freely as water to one of his fellows in distress. I can thus very well conceive that this good man, Higgins, might be touched by compassion for the situation of this poor girl, and lay out the plan that he says he has done, thinking it the very best thing for her and for you too, in which, perhaps, he is right."

Lieberg's last words were spoken calmly, deliberately, and thoughtfully; and not the most learned argumentations in favour of licentiousness would have been calculated to produce such a demoralizing effect as the deliberate matter-of-course manner in which he gave them utterance. It at once, in the very fewest possible words, and with the least possible shock, placed before the mind of Morley Ernstein the idea of seducing Helen Barham, and keeping her as a mistress, in the light of something not at all evil, and perhaps right; a thing to be considered, simply in regard to its convenience and expediency, without the slightest reference in the world to the morality or immorality of the transaction. Morley did not reply, but remained with his eyes thoughtfully fixed upon the floor, meditating over what he had just heard, and asking himself, it must be confessed, whether there is really an absolute right and wrong in such matters, or not.

"You must see your way in the business clearly, Ernstein," continued his friend, "and make very sure that you are not deceived in the girl's character; but I am inclined to think with you, that she is what she appears. However, one or two interviews will easily enable you to ascertain the fact. Art never yet looked so like nature as to deceive an eye sharpened by doubt and in a reasonable head."

"I shall most likely never see her again," replied Morley, "and therefore shall have small opportunity of judging."

"Indeed!—and why not?" demanded Lieberg.

"Simply because I think it dangerous," replied Morley. "She is very beautiful, very graceful, very charming. With such a brother it would be quite beyond my most romantic ideas to make her my wife; and as to the other sort of connection which you speak of, I can conceive a man being betrayed into it by accident, or rather by a combination of unfortunate circumstances, but could never dream, for my own part at least, of sitting down deliberately to plan such a thing. It does not enter into my scheme of life, Lieberg."

Lieberg laughed.

"I know that I am not without strong passions," continued Morley, "as well as you do. When I love, it will be vehemently, ardently; and whatever may be her fortune or station, I will make that woman my wife if she will become so. It is for this very reason that I do not choose to run the risk of falling in love with any one that I would not choose to marry. I shall therefore take care not to visit such dangerous precincts again."

"Well, if you don't, Ernstein," said Lieberg, "I think I shall."

Morley was mortified. "Perhaps, Lieberg," he replied, "if you do go, you may not find the opportunity that you expect."

"Nay, nay," answered Lieberg, laughing again; "you have no right to excite one's compassion for this fair orphan, and then, with a resolution to abandon her yourself, prevent any other generous man from showing her his sympathy."

"You mistake me," replied Morley, gravely. "I do not intend to abandon her myself."

"Why, you said you never intended to see her again!" exclaimed Lieberg, with surprise.

"I did," replied Morley; "but I intend also, Lieberg, the moment I quit your house to go to that of my worthy friend, Mr. Hamilton, to tell him this young lady's story; to beg him, with

that prompt benevolence for which he is famous, to investigate the whole circumstances, and on my part to do whatever may be necessary to enable Miss Barham to extricate herself from the situation in which she is placed. I feel myself lucky in knowing such a man; his years and character enable him to do what I could not do, and I can trust at once to his wisdom and to his zealous benevolence."

"You are quite right, Morley," answered Lieberg. "You are acting generously and well—not perhaps so well for the girl's happiness as if you had followed the other plan—but at all events, using self-denial that will do you good, and neither doing yourself nor making her do anything that is irretrievable. Heaven forbid that I should interfere for a moment to spoil such a scheme! Every man in life must calculate which he thinks will procure him the greatest sum of happiness, keen joys or calm pleasures. One man will argue that the joys—which undoubtedly are the brighter of the two commodities—are only followed by those counterbalancing griefs which moralists tell us of, in consequence of man's subserviency to various foolish prejudices and unjust regulations in his artificial state of being. Others again may contend that calm pleasures, though not so brilliant, are more durable; that they are extended over a greater space; that if a man obtains many joys and shakes off many griefs by throwing from him the prejudices of society, on the other hand, the very struggle with those prejudices is in itself an annoyance equal to the endurance of them all. I have never calculated the matter very nicely myself, but I recollect once going to see a fair cousin of mine who, when I went in, was in the act of giving two of her sons some jelly, or jam, or something of that kind. The one boy spread it thinly over a large piece of bread and butter; the other ate it plain all at once; my cousin, who was a very wise girl as well as a pretty one, let each do as he liked; and I, who stood by and watched, thought that it was a good picture and a good lesson of life."

"You mean," said Morley, "that the one boy was the image of the man who chooses the calmer pleasures spread over the greater space; the other, the representation of him who gives himself up to the brighter, but the briefer joys of life?"

"And my cousin's conduct," replied Lieberg, "gave me the lesson of letting every man do as he likes, and eat his bread and butter as he pleases. Thus, my dear Morley, I say to you; make up your mind upon the matter, and do as you think fit, though from all I have seen of you, I should suspect that there never was a man in this world more inclined by nature to eat his jam plain."

Morley laughed, and Lieberg added, "At all events, I will not meddle with your plans. I would not for the world, now I hear that you are really going to do something to assist the poor girl; my own views were very indefinite when I spoke of seeing her myself. My general purpose was merely to free her from her present situation, in whatever way seemed to me best suited to her own inclinations. However, I leave the matter in your hands; and now to return to this business of Neville and Stallfed. When the lesser of the two scoundrels comes to me, I suppose I am to say that you refuse all apology."

"Except such as can be conveyed by a horsewhip," replied Morley.

"Nay, nay," said Lieberg, "we will not deal in such figures of speech. I am to name a place and a time, of course?"

"The earliest possible," answered Morley. "I do not like such things hanging over me."

"To-morrow morning, then," said Lieberg. "Primrose-hill, half-past five, a pair of my friend Joe's best, with all the improvements, and we will soon settle Mr. Neville."

CHAPTER XI.

A NOBLE YOUTH.

"Is Mr. Hamilton gone into the city yet?" demanded Ernstein, as the door was opened to him by a servant who knew him well.

"No, Sir Morley," replied the man, with a look which well might be the harbinger of bad tidings. "Have you not heard, then, that my master was taken very ill in the middle of the night, and we were obliged to send for Doctor Warren?"

"No, indeed," answered Morley; "and I am extremely sorry to hear it. What is the matter, pray?"

There has not been for many years a servant in England who rightly knew what ailed his master or mistress; whether from a general indifference to sickness and discomfort in others, or from that want of sympathy between the two classes, which, under the fostering care of what we call political institutions, is daily growing up amongst us, I cannot tell. In former times, the good old blue-bottle—the faithful serving-man, in country or in town, who—very often born on the estates of the master whom he served—never changed his place during the course of a long life, but went on respected, from one station in the household to another, till, very likely, loaded with years, he died in the arms of the grandson of him whom he first served—he had a personal interest in each sensation of his master, and watched the looks and words of the physician, to catch his augury of good or evil. Now, however, when every kitchen in the land is more or less a debating society, all such individual interests are merged into considerations of the public weal; and the cosmopolite lackey changes his place every two years to see the world, with a trembling apprehension lest the progress of time should produce such a foolish feeling as attachment towards a master.

The servant of Mr. Hamilton, though a very respectable man, and a good servant, as the world of London goes—that is to say, some four or five shades better than an American help—had not the slightest idea of what was the matter with his master, having only the disagreeable impression on his mind that he, amongst other servants, had been called up in the night, and had lost some four or five hours of rest.

"Is Mrs. Hamilton visible?" demanded

Morley, finding that no further information was to be obtained from the man.

"I dare say she is to you, sir," replied the servant; "though she bade me not admit any one."

"Send up, and ask," said Morley; and the butler at the same moment appearing, declared that, of course, his mistress would see Sir Morley Ernstein.

That young gentleman was accordingly shown into the drawing-room, and Mrs. Hamilton soon after joining him there, gave him the unpleasant tidings that his worthy guardian had been attacked by inflammation of the lungs during the preceding night, and was in a state of imminent danger. Morley was seriously grieved; for, having long been deprived of his own father, he looked upon that gentleman in the light of a parent. He felt also that his loss at the present moment might be far more disastrous to him than the death of his own father had proved many years before. Perfect quiet and tranquillity were, of course, necessary to the invalid, and Morley did not press to see him, though he felt an eager wish to do so; but turned his steps back towards Berkeley-square, meditating and sad, with a shadow cast across the bright thoughts of youth, like that flung upon the gay spring world by the passing cloud of an April sky.

On entering his own apartments in the hotel, a waiter followed him, saying, with that sharp, quick tone peculiar to waiters, who always speak as if there was, not a drawn sword, but a ringing bell hanging over their heads—"Beg pardon, sir—forgot to tell you a young gentleman called upon you last night, named Barham—eight o'clock. Your servant out also—beg pardon, sir—note came this morning—somehow left downstairs till you were gone."

Morley took the note; it was small, neat, well folded, addressed, in a fine sort of a gossamer hand—"An invitation to dinner," he thought; but when he opened it, the length at once showed him he was mistaken.

"How to excuse myself to you, sir, I know not," it ran; "how even to exculpate myself in my own eyes, for venturing to address a gentleman almost a stranger to me, with the request that I am about to make. The only palliation for such conduct is, that in the short moment during which I saw you, you showed yourself generous and considerate, and that you yourself expressed an interest, which could but spring from noble benevolence, in the wretched boy who has ruined himself, and is now striving to drag his sister down with him. After you were gone, and the base man who has helped to destroy him had taken his departure, I was made acquainted with the terrible secret of his situation. It is so awful, it is so agonizing to me, that I have remained all day in a state almost approaching madness, not knowing how to act, torn by contending feelings, with no one to advise me, and with no means of deliverance, abhorring my brother's conduct and views, abhorring the base man that has us in his power, and yet bound, by natural feeling and long affection, to save, at any risk and at any sacrifice, the erring being who is still my brother, but seeing no way of so doing without becoming the victim myself. You said, sir, that you wished to save him, but, alas! he will not let you with his own good will. He will seek to make you a prey—to extract money from you; but he will not tell you the secret which places him in the power of that horrible man. I am resolved to do so, if I can see you again; and yet I fear, even by making the request that you would come to me, to encounter, as perhaps I may deserve, your contempt at the same time as your pity. Whether such be the case or not, I shall always remember, with deep thankfulness, your past conduct, and ever remain your unhappy but grateful servant,

"HELEN BARHAM."

To fly to her at once, to give her every assistance and consolation in his power, to treat her tenderly, kindly, generously, was the first impulse of Morley Ernstein, and he obeyed it. He gave one casual thought as to how he could act most prudently; but Mr. Hamilton's illness had put all his wisely-constructed schemes to flight. He had no one to trust to take counsel with, and though, to say truth, he doubted himself where matters of passion were concerned, but one course presented itself to his mind at the moment; and without waiting for aught else than to put on his hat again, he was in the street the minute after he had read Helen Barham's letter.

It was some time ere he reached her dwelling, and he thus might have had plenty of space for forethought and deliberation; but men of a vehement temperament like himself, when approaching any particular object, occupy the time, by corporeal efforts to get forward, which they might employ in thoughts that would much more facilitate their after progress. Morley was upon foot, and he strode on so rapidly, as nearly to overturn half a dozen people in his way—sometimes having to stop to apologize for his rudeness, sometimes half inclined to pause, and punish some of those who made impertinent observations on his haste—while all the cool considerations of right and propriety, with which, during the last week, he had striven to bind himself down, were now totally forgotten in the sole object of aiding the fair girl who was thus cast upon him for assistance.

If he was eager in the business at the first reading of the letter, he had worked himself into more eagerness before he reached the door, and it was only after the servant had said that her mistress was at home, and his step was upon the stairs, that he began to think of calming even his demeanour. He had but little opportunity, however, of doing on those twelve or fifteen feet of stairs, what he had neglected to do during a walk of a mile and a half. He did not give himself more time than was necessary either, for the impetus still carried him on, and he was treading on the maid's heels when she announced him.

Helen Barham had evidently heard his knock, and knew it, for she was standing on the other side of the table watching the opening door, blushing up to the eyes, and looking far more

beautiful with nothing round her face but her own rich black hair, than she had done in her walking-dress. She moved not—she spoke not, but remained with her eyes fixed upon him, and the hand that rested on the table trembling with emotion. Morley easily understood that she could not welcome him, and advancing at once towards her, he took her hand in his, saying —"Miss Barham, I fear you have thought me very negligent for not coming earlier, but the people of the hotel stupidly neglected to give me your note till after my return from calling upon two friends."

"Oh, no!" she said, in a trembling and agitated voice; "you are only too kind to come at all. It is better, too, that you did not come earlier, for that wretched boy has only just gone out, and I believe he would kill me if he knew that I betrayed his secret to any one."

"He need not fear your telling it to me," replied Morley; "for, depend upon it, I will only use it for his own advantage. Let me know, then, my dear Miss Barham, how I can serve you. Tell me what I can do to deliver you from the terrible situation I saw you placed in yesterday."

"I will, in a moment," she replied; "but I must first recall my thoughts. The very fact of your coming, Sir Morley Ernstein, may well agitate me very much. Since I wrote to you I have scarcely known whether to regret or to be glad that I did so—whether to be sorry or rejoice, that I had not, in my despair, abandoned myself and my unhappy brother to our fate."

"Nay, nay," said Morley, in a soothing tone —"view it in a different light, Miss Barham! Say simply that you saw I was interested in you, that I was inclined to deal differently with you and yours from most other men; that you trusted in my honour and my good feeling, and that you were not deceived."

"I know you are generously inclined," she said—"I am sure you are; but yet I have been thinking, since I wrote, you must despise me for the rashness and the boldness of what I have done; or, at least, that you must fancy it strange I should have no friends, no connections here to whom I can apply even for advice. Indeed—indeed, it is not my fault! For the nine months before my poor father's death, he was a continual sufferer; we came to London for medical advice, from a distant part of the country, and knowing nobody here, of course made no acquaintances. After his death, I got two pupils for singing, and one to whom I taught drawing. That poor child is dead, and the other two have left London. My brother, alas! has made acquaintances enough, but I have made none."

She spoke in a tone of deep sadness, and her eyes rested fixed upon the ground, but without tears. Morley was deeply touched, and soothed her with every assurance of sympathy. He took her hand in his, as he sat beside her; he besought her to trust in him fully and entirely, promising, with all his own impetuosity, but in sincerity and truth, to do all for her that man could do for a sister.

"If it be possible, dear Miss Barham," he said, "I will save your brother; but at all events, it is possible to save you from the infamous person into whose hands he would cast you. That, at least, you must allow me to do. But now, tell me at once your brother's situation, and let us consider together what can best be done to disentangle him, which will apparently be the best means of serving you."

"Oh, that I will!" she exclaimed, gently withdrawing her hand from his, in which he had detained it perhaps an instant longer than he himself thought right; and she then proceeded to explain to him more fully what had taken place after he left her the day before. It was a terribly difficult task for her. She had to allude to, if not to speak of, so much that was wounding to all her feelings; she had to show to a young, handsome, and distinguished man, that, unless means could be found for delivering her brother from the power of the low-born swindler whom he had seen there the day before, she must either abandon herself to that base man, or see her brother perish by an ignominious death. She had deliberately to poise and dwell upon the idea of becoming that man's mistress, or of destroying her own brother, and that to the ears of one of another sex, and a higher station than herself; and yet she did it well, at least as far as it was possible so to do. She often turned, and paused, and hesitated, and the tears came up in her eyes, and her voice frequently refused to obey her will, and she told the whole in half sentences, leaving imagination to fill up that which she dared not speak.

Thus did Morley Ernstein pass the most dangerous hour that he had ever yet been subjected to in life. The poor girl's secret, however, was told at length, and he found that her brother had committed a forgery to the amount of five hundred pounds; that the note which he had signed with a name not his own, was to pass through the hands of the man Neville, before it was presented for payment, and that William Barham himself did not know where it was, who possessed it, or any means that could be employed to stop it, till it reached the fiend to whom he had sold himself.

By the time that Helen Barham had done, Morley Ernstein was nearly as much agitated as herself, and the sympathies that were established between those two, as they sat there together—the deep, the strong, the thrilling sympathies, the feelings speaking from heart to heart, and answering each other; the admiration, the tenderness, the compassion, on one side—the admiration, the anguish, the gratitude, on the other, were as perilous a host as ever forced their way into the bosom of man and woman. The interest that Morley took in her, the anxiety that he felt to serve her; the apprehension for herself and for her brother, which her history excited, were all open to the eyes of Helen Barham, and were all in return powerful upon her spirit. At that moment, when, trembling, agitated, tearful, breathless, she concluded the sad tale with that one terrible truth, and when he, listening with quivering lips and eyes straining upon her bright face, heard the dark conclusion of the whole, which seemed to leave no course for him, no hope for her, but to snatch her at once from her

unworthy brother, one rash impulse, two rash words, "Be mine!" would have sealed the fates of both for ever. Had he uttered them, she could but have cast herself upon his breast, or died.

Those words, "Be mine," presented themselves to Morley's mind, rose up in his heart, trembled upon his lips; but as the destinies of men and states have ever depended upon accident, one instant's pause saved him and Helen Barham; whether permanently, or only for the time, those who read will learn. "Shall I say it?" he asked himself; and while his heart beat like an imprisoned eagle against the bars of its cage, his eyes turned towards the table and rested there for a moment. There was a book upon it, which she had evidently been reading before he came in, open, and turned upon its face. There was a word stamped upon the back, and Morley's glance passed over it—it was, Prayer!

In a moment lightning-like thought had passed round the whole range of the mental horizon.

"She has been praying," he thought—"praying to that God, who made her beautiful, and innocent, and bright—praying for help against the infernal powers of wickedness and evil, that seem to surround her; and shall I, the only help that he has sent her, shall I sully her brightness, destroy her innocence, and blister that fair brow with the name of harlot? God forbid!"

The ethereal spirit within him was triumphant in a moment, the hour of the animal spirit was over.

"Prayer!" he said, aloud—"prayer!" and rising from his seat, he took her hand tenderly and respectfully, and pressed it to his lips. "Here, Miss Barham," he said, laying his hand upon the book, "is the true means of comfort and consolation. He only to whom the words in this book are addressed, can certainly give you deliverance. I, however, as an instrument in his hands, will do my very best to help you; and whatever my fortune or my influence can effect, shall not be wanting, and what cannot fortune and influence do in this or any other land!"

He paused, and cast his eyes thoughtfully upon the ground; and she answered simply, as if she had been speaking her thoughts to an old and dear friend—"I was praying before you came in; and though my mind was somewhat confused, I felt comforted and relieved. I felt as if my heart told me that God would send somebody to help me—I think he sent you."

"May it prove so, dear lady," said Morley; "I trust it will prove so. You have put your confidence in one, who, though, in some respects, a strange, wayward young man, will try what he can do to merit it. First let me tell you, however," he continued, seeing a slight blush come up in Helen Barham's cheek, at the thought of having put her trust in *a strange, wayward young man*—"let me tell you what I have done in this business since I saw you yesterday, for you have not been absent from my thoughts. In the first place, the person who brought me the ear-rings saw me again last night, and gave me an intimation that this man Neville must have some extraordinary hold upon your brother, probably by a fault or crime which he has seduced him to commit. He also explained to me partially the conduct and views of your brother towards yourself. For the purpose of aiding you as far as possible, I offered him a sum of money if he would ascertain what was the nature of this man's power over your brother, and he promised me to obtain the information quickly. Considering the matter further, however, I thought that it might be necessary to remove you at once from the influence of one who, however near akin, is most dangerous to you, and to place you under the care of some one who would protect you against Neville and your brother, and at the same time, guard you against all the evils of straitened circumstances."

Helen Barham cast down her look upon the ground, and the red blood crept up into her forehead; she then turned her eyes rapidly to the book of Prayer, and raised them to Morley's countenance with an inquiring glance. He understood it all as well as if she had spoken a volume.

"Nay, my dear Miss Barham," he said; "do not misunderstand me; though passion may often lead me to do what is wrong, I am not the cool, deliberate villain to lay out a regular scheme for the ruin of any one. Your youth, your beauty, your unfriended situation altogether," he continued, while the blush grew deeper and deeper on her cheek, "all made me think that it would be better some man of advanced years and high reputation—some man whose very character would be the noblest shield for yours, should act in this business rather than myself; and one of my visits this morning, ere I received your note, was to the Honourable Mr. Hamilton, the great banker, who was my guardian in times past, and has ever acted as a second father to me. I intended to tell him the whole case, and to beg him to do what I could not, or ought not to do—to remove you from this house altogether, and to use every nerve to deliver your brother, but to put you quite out of his power, both in respect of pecuniary affairs and moral influence. Unfortunately, I found Mr. Hamilton had been seized only last night with a dangerous disease. Mrs. Hamilton, though an excellent person, is very different in heart and mind from her husband; thus the whole scheme is deranged for the present. We must therefore do the best that we can, as no time is to be lost, however painful it may be to you to depend solely upon the assistance and efforts of a young man like myself."

"Oh, no!" she cried, interrupting him eagerly, and laying her hand upon his arm, while she looked up in his face with a bright smile of confidence, that repaid him well for all that he had said and done. "Oh, no!" she cried; "it is not painful to me. I could trust anything to you, after your conduct to-day—my life, my honour, anything! Oh, no! it is not painful to me;" and bending down her face upon her two hands, she wept for a minute, with one of those bursts of emotion in which joy and sorrow are strangely, but perhaps we may say sweetly, blended together. Morley soothed her, but she wiped away the tears in a few moments, and said—"Do not mind, it

is only agitation, not grief. What were you going to say?"

"Merely this," replied Morley; "we have but one course to pursue, my dear Miss Barham, for the present. It is this—to discover, if possible, who is the person whose name your brother has thus forged. You must try to wring it from him, and, that being once obtained, I will endeavour, to the utmost of my power, and by all the means at my command, to make the person, whoever it is, abandon the thought of proceeding against him."

"But whoever it is will never consent to save a criminal by paying so large a sum," said Helen Barham.

"I will do that," replied Morley; and before he could prevent her, she caught his hand, and pressed her lips on it.

"God bless you!" she cried, "and return it to you a thousandfold, in treasures uncountable! —But, alas! I fear," she continued, after a thoughtful pause, "I shall never induce William to give me the name."

"Try, at all events," replied Morley. "I will endeavour, through the man who seems his confidant. If we fail by all other means, we must come openly to himself, show him his danger, prove to him that, as your resolution is taken, nothing can save him but confession, and offer to do everything for him if he will but be candid. But, indeed, my dear Miss Barham, before that time, you ought to be removed from him entirely, and put in safety and at ease. You say you have no friends in London; have you any in the country, with whom you could be?"

"But few," she replied, with a sigh. "Who loves to be burdened with the unfortunate? My father's parish was extensive, but poor; containing no gentry of any kind. There were several large and respectable farmers in it, and their wives were, in many cases, excellent women; some of them loved me well enough, I believe; but I could hardly ask any of them to receive me. My father, too, was retired in his habits, and made few acquaintances. There was the wife of a neighbouring clergyman, indeed, who was almost the only person near of the same station as ourselves; he is dead, but she lives in the village still, and, perhaps, might be willing to have me with her; but I could do nothing there to earn my own livelihood, and I would not be a burden to her, or to any one. Besides, I wrote to her a week or two ago, and have not heard from her since."

"Your stay need only be for a few weeks," replied Morley. "Ere long, I trust, Mr. Hamilton will be quite well; I will place your affairs in his hands, Miss Barham, and then the matter will soon be settled. It is only for the present that I do not know what to do for you. I think it absolutely necessary that, for a time, even on his own account, your brother should be cut off from all communication with you, if he will not give that information which is necessary to deliver him from the hands of this man, Neville; and yet I myself can suggest no means, no place of refuge, without danger or discredit to you; and, believe me," he added, "I would not, for any consideration, bring upon you either."

"Indeed, I do believe you!" she said, looking brightly up in his face; "but, oh, sir! you seem to fix your whole hopes and expectation upon Mr. Hamilton's recovery. Are you very sure that, if he were well to-morrow, he would feel in this matter as you do—that he would judge as you do? The old see things very differently from the young; the heart gets cased by experience, if not hardened—and judgment is a sterner person to deal with than feeling. I recollect one of my young pupils wanted to persuade her mother to take me with them into the country, because I looked sad at their going—as well I might. The mother explained to her kindly, that it would never do; and I could not but own that she was right; and yet I loved the daughter better than the mother."

Morley smiled. "You do not know Mr. Hamilton," he said; "he is as young in heart as I am, though old in experience, and mature in judgment. He is one of those few, Miss Barham, in whose enthusiasms I can trust."

"I doubt not," replied Miss Barham, "that he will take a kind interest in me on your account; that he will give me countenance and protection, and ensure me the means of obtaining my own living respectably. That is all I can desire, or expect. Most grateful to him shall I be; but he can never do for me what you have done—raise me up from the depth of sorrow and despair; comfort, support, protect me—and all with honour and consideration, without one selfish or ungenerous feeling,—without one evil thought mingling with your benevolence to make me blush at the pity I excited, or the assistance I received."

It was Morley who blushed now, for he felt that though he had been generous, he had not been altogether so generous as she supposed. He felt that the passions which man encourages, and thinks no evil, though subdued and kept down, might have had their share; and that those feelings had been there which we will not believe have power to sully till we place our own heart in contrast with something brighter than itself. He coloured, as we have said, and was somewhat confused; and, after promising to see her again on the following morning, and beseeching her to use every means to wring the required information from her brother, he left her, and returned thoughtfully to his temporary home.

CHAPTER XII.

THE NIGHT BEFORE THE DUEL.

THE table was covered with notes, but they were all insignificant, and Morley glanced over them with an eye which showed how abstracted the mind was, and how busy with other topics. He had thrown the last down, and, with his hand still resting on the table, was gazing forth into vacancy, when the door of the room opened, and Lieberg entered, with his usual gentlemanly, but impressive manner.

"Well, Morley," he said, "I have arranged it all for you, as was proposed; these two men,

Stallfed and Neville, had evidently heard all about you, so far as your being wealthy, young, and unacquainted with London; and they proposed to make a very pleasant speculation of Neville's quarrel with you, and share some five hundred pounds between them, or perhaps more; but the fact of your referring them to me, instead of some of your college companions, as they expected, has sadly disappointed them."

"Why, how could they calculate so wildly?" exclaimed Morley. "They could never imagine that I was to be frightened into paying them money for the privilege of not fighting?"

"Oh, no, no!" answered Lieberg; "that was not the way, at all. The way it was to be arranged was this: Stallfed was to treat you in the most gentlemanly manner, and no one can assume the tone of a high-bred gentleman better than he can, when he likes it. The slightest apology on your part was to be accepted; the Captain was to be smitten with high admiration of your gentlemanly bearing, and bold demeanour. You were to be invited to dinner, accommodated with champagne, and claret, perhaps a little laudanum, or some other exhilarating fluid; cards and dice were to be at your service—and the result was to be, the enriching of themselves, and the pillaging of you."

"Why, how did you discover all this?" said Morley. "You certainly have some extraordinary way of getting at people's secrets!"

"Not at all," replied Lieberg; "it is pure intuition, Ernstein. I know the whole thing, as well as if it had been done and I had seen it. This man, Neville, I have long known, to the very innermost corners of his dark mind. He won two hundred pounds of me at Ascot, last year, with such barefaced cheatery, that he himself did not expect me to pay the money——"

"But did you pay it?" exclaimed Ernstein, in some surprise.

"To be sure!" answered Lieberg. "Was it not well worth two hundred pounds to keep one's name out of the newspaper, in connection with that of a blackleg? The very reputation of having over-reached Colonel Lieberg, was as much to him as winning another great battle would be to the Duke of Wellington. The consequence was, that I pretended to be looking another way and very busy about other business, paid the money as fast as ever I could, for fear the whole affair should be exposed by other people who had bets, and got off the course before the thing was inquired into, leaving Hartley, of the Third, to horsewhip Neville, and have his name in the 'Times,' coupled with an action of battery. However, Ernstein, my simple reply to the worthy Captain, was, that you were quite prepared to give Mr. Neville satisfaction; that your place was Chalk Farm, your hour half-past five, and that we set our watches by the Horse-Guards. If Neville comes to the ground, I am very much mistaken; though Stallfed has one virtue—namely, courage, and will bring him if possible. I will call for you at a quarter after five to-morrow, and roll you up to the place. What do you intend to do, if the fellow does come? I know you have odd notions about these sort of things."

"Shoot him!" replied Morley, vehemently. "Shoot him, as I would a mad dog, and upon the same principle. I am not a man to miss what I fire at, Lieberg, let it be living or dead; and if he calculates that I am too humane to kill a viper like him, who is spreading poison and destroying wherever he goes, he is very much mistaken."

"I think you are quite right, Ernstein," replied Lieberg. "For my own part, I do not see any use of going out to fight a man, unless one fires at him; it is very silly work to stand up to be shot at, and then to waste a certain portion of good powder by firing in the air."

"But there are some circumstances," said Morley, "when a man could not fire at another—after having done him a great injury, for instance."

"I know none," replied Lieberg, drily. "The man who calls out another with any reason to believe that his adversary will not fire at him, must be somewhat of a coward, and deserves to be shot for his pains. Oh, no; child's play does not become reasonable men! Of course, I never interfere with what a friend chooses to do in such cases. But I think you are quite right; and in shooting Neville, you will be doing a benefit to society; in reward for which, there ought to be a general subscription, to present you with a very handsome pair of long barrels. Mind you don't miss him—don't take him too fine!—I am going to see that great picture of Reubens'," he continued, in his usual easy tone—"will you come? He is a magnificent painter—Reubens; and yet I hate his pictures—it always seem to me as if he had skinned all his men, and pinched all his women. Many of them are certainly very natural, but it is a fat and undignified nature, too. Was there ever anything like that St. Peter at Cologne? How the saint is roaring in his unpleasant position! One seems to hear the very cries of agony coming from his mouth; and yet it does not give us a very elevated idea of the saint—to see him with his head downwards, bellowing, like a cross man with the gout. Will you come?"

Morley, however, declined; he had much to think of; and after Lieberg had left him, he sat for a long time, revolving in his own mind the situation of Helen Barham, but endeavouring in vain to arrange some plan to place her in a less dangerous situation, till Mr. Hamilton was well enough to give him counsel and assistance. He thought of her much—he thought of her long—of her beauty, of her grace, of a certain wild, sparkling manner, very different from the demeanour of the young lady of the fashionable society, but very winning withal, and very charming. Pity mingled with the train of reflection, and softened admiration into tenderness; at the same time there was a sort of consciousness that she was entirely in his power—that she was the creature of his will, not by any tie of mere circumstance, but by the tie of gratitude and admiration. The better spirit, however, as we have said, had gained the triumph; and though passion might urge, and vanity prompt, it was all in vain—Morley did not yield for a moment, but went on in high

speculations on the destinies of human beings—of the strange and, apparently, wayward turns of fate—and of that far, but sublime period when the ways of God will be justified, even to the eyes of his creatures, when those who have suffered, and yet believe, will rejoice, and those who have doubted and rebelled, will be covered with confusion, on finding that all is bright, and good, and excellent in the scheme of Divine wisdom.

The spirit of the soul, as I have called it, exerted her sway during that hour with calm but mighty power. He dwelt upon many a curious question with himself, both general and referring to the chief matter of the day, and although the idea of marrying Helen Barham, and thus freeing her from all her difficulties, never entered into his mind as a thing that could take place, because he could not dream of allying himself to one so base as her brother was proved to be, yet he asked himself, had circumstances been different, would he have offered her his hand? The answer was—"No—she was not the being he would have chosen." And why was she not so? became the next question. Could any one be more lovely?—could any style of beauty whatsoever be more fit to excite ardent passion? Had he a doubt of her virtue? of her simplicity, or truth? No, no, no! He could not tell why. He did not, or he would not, investigate why he felt that, although, had he given way to the temptation of circumstances, and the strong inclination of his own heart, he might have made Helen Barham his mistress—he would not choose her for his wife. Let not the reader suppose that it was any evil in her character, anything that betrayed itself therein, and which he felt, though he could not define it. No; she was all that she seemed—pure, bright, generous-hearted, tender, devoted, not without some faults, but those such as would little affect domestic peace. No! it was nothing in her character, but it was something in his heart. Reader! it was a memory!

Morley Ernstein was one of those who had formed for himself the picture of her who was to be his; and, as we have shown the reader, he had once seen the face of his visions. Whether the mind was there he knew not, but that face was ever present to his memory, and it was not that of Helen Barham. Bright, and beautiful, and sunny as she was, he might feel passion towards her, pity, tenderness, esteem—but no, not love! There was a something wanting still; I cannot well tell what, and will not seek to do so, for love is like one of those fine elixirs, which some skilful and life-restoring hands have formed, and which we may analyze as we will, separating the parts with every scientific aid, but still something escapes, which we cannot discover, something which gives virtue and efficacy to the whole.

The thoughts of Morley Ernstein strayed naturally and by imperceptible steps from Helen Barham back to that fair young being whom he had seen once, and only once in life. The idea brought back the thoughts and feelings of the day when he had met her, so short a time before, and yet seeming far, far away in the past; so many had been the fresh incidents which had crowded into that brief period of his career. There was a sweet and soothing pleasure in the very remembrance. There always is, in the memory of first love; it is like the memory of our early home. A first love is surely the early home of the heart. It came upon him so pleasantly, with such tranquillizing influence, with such balmy power, that he resolved, as soon as he could disentangle himself from the affairs which now pressed upon him, he would return to his own old hall; to his own park, and its shady trees; to the sweet singing of the summer birds, the smoke of the peasant's cottage, the village church, the cheerful upland, and all that made the bright picture to memory of the native place he had left behind.

Suddenly, however, the questions broke upon him—how should he return to it? and should he ever be able to enjoy, as he had enjoyed it—to taste the same pleasures with the same zest? Had he not passed by the moment of such delights? Had he not known, and felt, and lived, beyond the hour of such calm happiness? Then imagination went on to the work laid out for the following day; to the act that he was about to commit; to the bringing of blood upon his hand; to the slaying of a fellow-creature; to the imprinting on the irrevocable roll of deeds done, the dark word—"Death!"

He started away from his own thoughts; his mind was made up and fixed; his determination had been announced, and he resolved that he would think upon the matter no more. He would amuse his thoughts; he would mingle with the crowded world; he would go to the party to which he was invited that night, and do the deed he had purposed to do, as a mere matter of course; and yet there was one thing which he had to consider, and which, till late on that day, he did not consider at all—namely, that he might himself fall in the encounter. He did not think it likely, but such an event might take place. Neville was a coward, evidently well known to be so; but the most notorious cowards, aided by accident, and the cat-in-a-corner courage of despair, have been known to shoot men of duelling reputation. He might fall, then, and at all events it was necessary to make some preparation for such a result. He sat down accordingly, pen in hand, to draw up a little memorandum of his last wishes; and although, as I have already said, his property was originally very large, and had been increased greatly by the care of Mr. Hamilton, his will was soon made, and compressed in a few lines.

He left his two former guardians his executors; explained very briefly his knowledge of Helen Barham, her circumstances, and the bad conduct of her brother. He besought Mr. Hamilton to act entirely as her guardian, knowing that, with him, that would be only another name for acting as her father, and he left her so large a portion of the sum accumulated during his minority, as to place her in a state of affluence for life, with one or two thoughtful provisions, to ensure that it should never fall within the grasp of a sharper. His landed property he suffered to take its legal course, which led it, in

case of his death, to a very distant branch of his family, none of whom he had seen above two or three times in the course of his life, and whose representatives had satisfied themselves, during his minority, by inquiring tenderly, once or twice in the year, after his health, which had always proved so vigorous as to exclude them from all reasonable hope of entering into possession themselves.

There was still a large sum to be disposed of, and Morley thought for a moment what he should do with it; for it sometimes so happens, that when thousands are starving, and worse than starving, around, a rich man, caught by the sudden arrest of death, looks about him embarrassed for some object on which to bestow his wealth. There were several things that Morley had proposed to do; institutions he had dreamt of founding; good deeds of various kinds which he had thought to perform; but, alas! of all the many things that are killed by delay, none are so easily slaughtered as those same good deeds. Morley found now that there was no time to make such arrangements as he had proposed, with that precision and circumlocution which the law of England requires, as if for the express purpose of embarrassing a man's mind at a period when his mind is rarely very clear, and wasting his time, when time is too seldom very abundant. He therefore contented himself with leaving the great bulk of his funded property to Mr. Hamilton, for the purpose of being distributed amongst such persons as that gentleman should find most necessitous and deserving, in the course of the next three years. From this, indeed, he reserved a few small sums for annuities to his servants, and for remembrances to one or two of his college friends. To Lieberg he left some fine pictures; and an impulse that he could not resist, made him bequeath some diamonds which had been his mother's, as a token of gratitude to Juliet Carr.

"Mr. Hamilton will smile," he thought, "if he have occasion to open this will, and may well smile, if he should ever know that Helen Barham I have seen twice, Juliet Carr perhaps once—perhaps not at all;" and leaning his head on his hand, he began again to think of the scene which had taken place in the road under his own park wall, and of the beautiful being he had there beheld, upon whom his imagination had fixed a name which might very well belong to some one else.

Morley Ernstein dined, dressed himself, and went out to a party, which had been announced to him, by the lady who gave the invitation, as a small and an early one. Perhaps of all others this was the kind of society that he would not have chosen on that occasion. He would rather have been in the midst of a gay world of sights and sounds, each appealing strongly to imagination for a moment, and changing again ere the mind could get weary. But the lady who had asked him had some claims upon him; she was an old friend of his mother's; had been kind and affectionate to him in his youth; was of a very amiable character, though somewhat eccentric in her enthusiasms and her self-devotion; and thus, as he knew she counted much upon his presence that night, he would rather have disappointed any person in London than Lady Malcolm. He accordingly proceeded to her house not very long after the hour she had named; but there was already a number of people in the rooms, almost all of them belonging to the best society in London, but deviating from their usual late habits to please a person universally respected and liked.

Lady Malcolm herself, always lady-like notwithstanding some touches of eccentricity, was in the small outer room, receiving and talking to a group of gentlemen who had entered not long before Morley himself. She greeted her young friend gladly, and then added, with a marked smile—"If you go on, Sir Morley, you will find an acquaintance in those other rooms."

As she said this, she turned to speak again with the other party, and Morley advanced into a larger chamber beyond, where a number of gentlemen and ladies were collected, talking of everything and nothing upon the face of the earth. As the room, however, was not very large, neither of the three being at all upon a grand scale, Morley's entrance caused some little sensation, for, as we have before said, his appearance was distinguished, his countenance handsome, the expression not ordinary, and his whole carriage that of a very high-bred gentleman. The first person who saw him, asked others who stood near, who he was, and it soon spread through the whole, that he was the rich young Baronet who had lately come of age. Those who were acquainted with him, approached eagerly to speak with him, and several others asked to be introduced.

In the demeanour of a man pre-occupied with any grave and powerful feelings, there is generally a tone of cold firmness, which is impressive to the indifferent and the light-hearted, and Morley, at that moment, was too full of the thoughts of to-morrow to be at all carried away by the light conversation of a party like that. Some called him haughty; some thought him vain; some pronounced him cold; some said he was purse-proud. One or two men of high rank judged more favourably of him, and declared that his bearing was just what it should be; but after suffering himself to be detained for a few minutes, the young gentleman moved on, and entered the third chamber, which concluded the little suite of Lady Malcolm's receiving rooms. He was making his way towards a table covered with drawings, when a sight presented itself, which caused him to stop short, and pause, as if suddenly rooted to the ground. The sight, however, was certainly a pleasant one, for it was that of as beautiful a face as was ever seen, but if it had been that of Venus herself, fresh risen from the sparkling Mediterranean wave, it could not, independent of association, have had the effect upon Morley Ernstein which was produced by that fair countenance.

There—there before him, in the rooms of Lady Malcolm, was the same soft, yet dazzling face; the same deep blue eyes, with their dark lashes; the same clear forehead and fair brow; the same short, chiselled lip, with the rosy mouth half open, in the act of speaking; the same beautiful

form, every line of which was contour and symmetry, the same bright being, in short, which he had seen once, and as he believed only once, in life before, when they had stood together for a moment, by her horse's side, in the mellow light of a spring morning. She was conversing with a lady who sat on the sofa beside her, but her eyes were full upon Morley Ernstein; and, on his part, after the first sudden pause of surprise was over, with a look of bright satisfaction that could not be mistaken, he crossed the room at once, and took her hand in his, as if he had known her twenty years, forgetting altogether, that at that moment he was not even sure of her name.

She smiled upon him kindly, evidently recollecting him well, and not displeased with the recollection. There was a faint blush, too, came up in her face, not like the blush of agitation, indeed, but that sort of sudden transient glow, which comes over a cheek unhackneyed to any strong sensations, upon even a slight emotion. There are few people in the world more to be pitied than women who have lost the power of blushing. With them the bloom has gone off the fruit indeed. She blushed slightly, as I have said, and Morley inquired after her health, and spoke of the time when they had last met, and his eyes sparkled, and his lip became full of expression, and there was eagerness in his whole tone, so that those who had seen him in the other room would hardly have known him now. So much can two steps do to change the whole feelings of the human heart.

Scarcely, however, had he uttered many sentences when the feeling that he had never been introduced to the fair being to whom he was speaking in so intimate a tone—that he had, in fact, according to the usages of society, no right even to know her, first embarrassed, and then made him smile at his embarrassment, and seeing a vacant seat beside her on the sofa, he took possession of it at once, resolved to wait till Lady Malcolm came into the room, in order that no idle form for the future might stand in the way between them. They spoke of ordinary subjects for a few minutes—that is to say, subjects which any one might talk of to another, though in London society in general people do not do so—of the beauty of the country where they had last met; of the pleasures of the country in general; of the superiority of that which, according to the old adage, God himself made, over that which man made. The lady who sat beside them, either thought their comments very tiresome, or perceived that one of the party might feel it as pleasant if he were left alone with his neighbour, and, contrary to the usual course of human benevolence, she rose, and went away to speak to a dear friend in the doorway.

If she supposed that the conversation of Morley Ernstein and his fair companion would be more free after she was gone, she was very much mistaken. For the first few minutes, they had both very nearly fallen into absolute silence, though their thoughts were busy. As often happens on such occasions, it was the lady who first spoke.

"I am happy," she said, "to see that you are so completely recovered."

"Then you are Juliet Carr," said Morley, abruptly; "I was sure it was so, from the description of my good old servant, Adam Gray."

"Indeed!" said the young lady, with the warm blood now rushing quick into her glowing cheek—"indeed! The truth is," she added, a moment after, "that in passing by the place where you were lying ill, I heard of the accident that had occurred, and in going near your house, in one of my walks round Yelverley, I thought it best to inform your servants that such was the case, suspecting that they might not know it, as, indeed, they did not."

"And most grateful am I, dear Miss Carr," replied Morley, "for your taking the trouble of letting them know. However much interest you might create in me on our first meeting, I could hardly hope that I had excited any such kind feelings in you, when my rash folly, in leaping my horse over the park palings, might have killed you, and certainly did alarm you very much."

"Your kindness after it was done," replied Juliet Carr, in a calm tone, "made ample compensation; but," she added, in a lower voice, and with her eyes cast down upon the ground, "that was not the first time that we ever met."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Morley, in his turn surprised, and under the first impulse speaking out the plain truth, without any of the softenings of conventional life—"I did not think it possible, that if I had once seen you on the whole earth before, even for a single moment, I could ever have forgotten you."

His fair companion answered not for a moment, and he added—"Where—where was it, Miss Carr? I do not recollect any one even of your name in our neighbourhood. Where was it?"

"In this very house—in this very room," replied Juliet Carr. "We have played together many a time upon the carpet, and you used to tease me sadly," she added, with a playful look, "when you were eight years old, and I was seven."

"God give me the opportunity of teasing you again!" exclaimed Morley, with a bright laugh—her words illuminating, in a moment, the whole dark void of the past, like a flash of lightning in a murky night; "and is it possible that you were my little July, my little summer-month, as I used to call you? It is the only name by which I ever knew you; for, indeed, dear Juliet, I was not aware that your name was Carr. Do you recollect"—he added—but ere he could conclude his sentence, the memory of the light, boyish feelings of the past, became mingled so strangely with the intense manly feelings of the present, as to make him almost regret he had begun the question, and caused his voice to tremble as he went on, feeling that he must conclude—"Do you recollect how you promised to be my wife?"

Juliet Carr turned deadly pale, and Morley could scarcely hear her voice, as she replied, "Oh yes, oh yes! I remember something of it."

His heart sunk, for he was inexperienced in matters of love, and thought that, in that paleness, and that low tone, he perceived a thousand things which they did not imply in the least.

Such feelings as his, however, are seldom without hope, and he soon rallied again; but he resolved, ere he said more upon subjects of so deep an interest, to watch and see, to mark every word and every tone, to gather by some means, in short, the certainty that there was no such bar as another attachment between her heart and his. So far he resolved wisely; but he went on to determine that he would guard his own affections carefully, that he would take care not to fall in love with Juliet Carr till he was certain there was no obstacle to her loving him again. In this he resolved very foolishly, as every man does who takes resolutions in regard to things that are past. Morley Ernstein had no longer any power not to love Juliet Carr. He might guard the posterns of the citadel as he would, —the garrison had already surrendered, and the enemy had entered by the great gates.

Morley might have been somewhat puzzled to renew the conversation, after the momentary pause for thought which succeeded the last word spoken. It is a great art in that sort of communion which he was holding with Juliet Carr, never to let any subject drop entirely without leaving some sort of link in the chain open to hook it on to another. Morley was relieved from his difficulty, however, though not in the manner which he might have liked the best. The lady who had been talking with his fair companion when he first saw her that evening, returned, and spoke with her again for a few minutes. What she said Morley did not hear, for he went on thinking upon the subject which, for the time, was predominant in his own mind. After a moment or two, however, he saw Miss Carr's eyes directed towards the man with whom the other lady had been speaking in the doorway, and at the same time a sort of shudder seemed to come over her, while she said, "Can you really admire such conduct?"

The lady made some reply, which Morley did not hear, laughed, with a gay toss of her head, and went away again.

Morley Ernstein was now better prepared to carry on the conversation, for his mind had turned to the past, and to the childish days which he had spent in that house with Juliet Carr. "Am I mistaken in thinking, Miss Carr," he asked, "that you are a niece of Lady Malcolm's? It seems to me, that I recollect having heard such was the case, long ago."

"Oh no," replied Juliet Carr; "our relationship is not so near. My mother was Lady Malcolm's cousin; but you know how generous and high-spirited she is; and since my mother's death she has always acted towards me more as a mother than anything else—at least, when she has been permitted to do so."

"I really do not see, Miss Carr," replied Morley Ernstein, "the exact connection between Lady Malcolm's generosity and high spirit, and her affection for you; I should think it very possible to love you dearly, without any great liberality of feeling."

He spoke with a smile, and evidently in a tone of assumed playfulness; but Juliet Carr replied, eagerly—"Oh, indeed! in this case you are mistaken; it needed great kindness and generosity for Lady Malcolm to feel an affection for me at all, as my birth kept her from a considerable property, which, at that time, I have heard, she was much in need of."

"Then, I trust, you are with her now for a long time," said Morley Ernstein.

"I have only leave of absence for three weeks," she answered; and the moment after added, in a low tone, "Thank Heaven, he is gone!"

Morley had remarked that, during the last five minutes, her eyes had turned frequently towards the gentleman who stood in the doorway, and who had now just moved away with a slight degree of lameness in his walk. There was quite sufficient love in Morley's breast to make him feel an eager—I might almost call it an apprehensive, interest in all Juliet Carr's thoughts, and, with his usual impetuosity, he said at once, "May I know who the gentleman is, Miss Carr, whose departure seems to afford you so much relief?"

"I really do not know," replied Juliet, with a smile, which might, perhaps, be at Morley's impetuous questioning, or perhaps, at her own ignorance of the man's name, for whose absence she had thanked Heaven—"I really do not know," she answered, and then stopped, gazing in his face, with that smile, as if to puzzle him still further. Morley looked down upon the ground, but would ask no further questions; and seeing a sort of determination in his countenance not to do so, Juliet Carr added, in a lower tone, and with a graver look, "I can tell you what he is, though I cannot tell you who."

"What, what?" asked Morley, eagerly.

"He is a duellist!" replied Juliet Carr. "Lady Emily Greenfield came up, just now, to tell me a good deal about him; she says that he killed another man in a duel, a fortnight ago."

There was a look of abhorrence and pain in her beautiful face as she spoke, which brought some strange sensations into Morley's heart, when he thought of the part he was about to play the next morning; and he replied, "Perhaps he could not help it!"

"Could not help it!" exclaimed Juliet Carr, with a look of surprise, and forgetting, in her eagerness, the lapse of thirteen or fourteen years, she added—"Could not help it! Oh, Morley!"

Morley felt as if he could have cast himself at her feet, in gratitude for that one word; but he governed his impetuous nature, and followed out the subject on which they were speaking. "Perhaps," he said, in explanation, "he was grossly insulted by this man whom he shot. Perhaps his adversary called him out, and made him fight."

"But, do you mean to say," asked Juliet Carr, "that there are any circumstances in which a man cannot help deliberately killing another? I myself think, that no man ought to fight a duel at all; but even if he be weak enough to risk his own life for a vain prejudice, he has no right to take that of another. God will ask the blood of his brother at his hand," she added, lifting her beautiful eyes as if towards the heavens; "and though he may smother the voice of conscience, in this world, he must not

hope that he will escape punishment in another. Oh! think what a horrible thing it is to take away that existence which we can never restore; to cut off, in a moment, a fellow-being, from all the warm and sweet relationships of life; to change the living being, instinct with a bright spirit, into a dull mass of inanimate clay, and, worse than all, to put the seal of fate upon the sins, and follies, and crimes of a fellow-being; to cut him off for ever from repentance, and bring the day of judgment upon his head, without time for thought, or preparation, or hope, or atonement! Oh, no, no! if such a thing had happened to me, I would hide myself from all eyes in the darkest corner of the earth. I would spend my whole life in bitterness and tears. I should never know a moment's peace—I should think I heard the voice of him whom I had murdered, crying for ever in my ears, 'You have not only destroyed the body, but condemned the soul!'"

Morley had been gazing thoughtfully on the ground, but he now replied, "There may be some cases, Miss Carr, where we should be doing a benefit to society, in firing at a man opposed to us in a duel. Suppose that he were one of those criminals who are daily committing crimes that the laws will not reach?"

"Leave him to God!" replied Juliet, eagerly. "Leave him to God! His law will sooner or later reach all, and it is a law of mercy as well as justice."

They both paused; Juliet with a warm glow upon her cheek, from a feeling that she had been speaking with some vehemence, and Morley doing what so few people ever do in conversation, really weighing the arguments that were addressed to him, and applying them to his own heart.

"But suppose," he said—"suppose a man so placed that his own life is at stake. There are circumstances in which there is every probability that a man must either take life or lose it. For instance, when your adversary is known as an infallible shot, where you have but one chance for your own existence, and where, judging yourself in the right, you have every reason to defend your own life, even at the sacrifice of that of an enemy whom you know to be in the wrong?"

"It is a hard case," replied Juliet Carr, with her eyes cast down upon the ground; "but I am really not fit to be a judge upon such matters, and perhaps have said more than I ought upon the subject already."

"Nay," said Morley; "I really wish to hear your opinion. Believe me it is valuable to me, for I think a woman often judges these sort of things more sanely than a man."

"Well, you shall have it!" replied Juliet Carr, "though it is little worth having. You must recollect that I think no man has any right to fight at all, if he be a Christian. He ought, therefore, never to be there, and if he will go there, I cannot see why, to save his own life, he should add a great crime to a great fault, and make murder terminate strife. Perhaps this is speaking too harshly; but what I mean to say is, that I should love, and respect, and admire the man most who, if he have not resolution enough to refuse to fight, would show that his courage went to the high pitch of risking all, rather than do that which he knew to be the highest pitch of evil. Were I a man I would rather lose life than keep it under a continual sense of remorse—nay, even as a weak woman, I say the same; and I am sure in the choice my courage would not fail."

Morley gazed at her for a moment with tenderness and admiration; but he then replied, as he saw Lady Malcolm approaching them, "Well, then, I promise you, that if ever I should be called upon to fight, I will recollect your lesson of to-night, and not fire at my adversary."

Juliet looked as if she would fain reply, but Lady Malcolm came up, with a smile, saying, "So you have found each other out! She is scarcely at all changed—is she, Morley?"

"So little, at least in manner," replied Morley, "that every instant I feel myself inclined to forget the years that have past, and to call her Juliet."

If ever lover made an artful speech in this world, it was that which had just proceeded from the lips of Morley Ernstein; for it brought about quietly, as he well knew it would, that which he did not dare to ask openly.

"Why should you call her anything else?" asked Lady Malcolm. "You were like brother and sister in your childhood. Call her Juliet, to be sure. I am certain she has no objection. Have you, my dear girl?"

Morley felt very strongly that they were not brother and sister now, and perhaps Juliet Carr did the same, for she blushed while she replied, "None, assuredly."

"And will you call me Morley again?" demanded her lover—for so we may now well name him.

"Yes," answered Juliet Carr, looking up with that candour of heart which is far, far more attractive than the finest art that ever coquette devised; "I shall find no difficulty in it, for old habits come back with such force that I can scarcely call you anything else."

Morley felt that in the new game he was playing, he had won a point; and, casting from him all thoughts of the following morning, he lingered on at Lady Malcolm's house till he was the last guest present. He then took leave, and quitted the house where he had spent a night of joy, such as he had never known till then; but as he turned from the door, and the memory of the dark business before him rushed upon his mind, it seemed as if a cold wind blew upon him.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DUEL.

In the evening and the morning, small objects cast long shadows; but in the mid-day, the meridian sun makes all bright. Not so exactly, however, is it with the day of life, as any man must have felt who has been called upon to repeat, at two distant times in his existence, the same unpleasant act. Take fighting a duel for an instance: with what different feelings the same man sets about the deed, at two or three-and-twenty, and five or six-and-thirty. How

the gay buoyancy of youth carries us over the light ruffle of the sea at one period! how little do we heed the menacing storm! how little do we care for the momentary tempest! how confident are we of safety and success! But, at the other period, however strong may be our resolution, however firm our purpose, however unshaken our nerve, we go to the task set before us with a knowledge of every particle of the peril, with a clear notion of all the consequences, with a calculation of each point of the result. The grasp of a friend's hand comes with a consciousness that it may be for the last time; the look we give to those we love has in it the tenderness of a farewell, and at the same time, all the mighty responsibility of taking the life of another is pressed upon reflection by every sight of human existence around us, by all the fresh joys and hopes that we see in the bosoms of our own fellow-men. Morley Ernstein, however, was in the early day of life; fear was a thing unknown to him, and even with awe he was not very familiar. Thus, when Lieberg's cabriolet came to the door in Berkeley Square, he sprang in with a light step; and, with as cheerful a voice as if he had been going to a wedding, he gave his friend the "Good morning," and asked if he were not a little late.

"Oh, no!" answered Lieberg; "in very good time, and my chestnut here will carry us up as if he were running for the Derby."

Away they rolled at a rate which had something exhilarating in its rapidity. London was soon left behind; its lengthy suburbs were speedily crossed, and the singing of a lark in the early morning, told that the horse's hoofs were treading the country. The spot appointed was soon reached, the boy handed out the pistol-case, and took the horse, and Morley and his friend walked forward into the field, where no one as yet had made his appearance. It was a beautiful summer morning as ever was seen; the country, even in the neighbourhood of London, looked lovely in the early light, and the world altogether seemed too pleasant a place to quit willingly. But Morley Ernstein, though his was the especial time of life when joys are fullest and hopes brightest, and all the things that endear to us mortal existence are in their most attractive aspect, never thought about quitting the world at all. He found it difficult to impress upon his mind the idea of danger; and though a momentary sensation of awe had come over him during the preceding night, all such feeling had gone off, and he looked about for his adversary, in the mere desire of getting a disagreeable business over as soon as possible.

"I would bet five to three that he does not come," said Lieberg; "and really I think that if he do not, I shall go and horsewhip him myself, for making me get out of my bed at half-past four."

Scarcely had he spoken, however, when the roll of wheels was heard, and a very handsome travelling chaise, with four post-horses, appeared, and drew up at the gate leading into the field. The door was opened, and forth came Mr. Neville, with his friend, Captain Stallfed, whom Morley had seen once before, and a gentleman in black, possessing extensive whiskers, not very well combed, long French-cut hair, and a surgical appearance about the nose and eyes, which at once bespoke his profession.

"Upon my word," said Lieberg, "this looks like execution! Now, Morley, what will you bet that all this is not part of a solemn farce, to squeeze an apology out of you?"

"It will not succeed," answered Morley, and he walked on with Lieberg, to meet the advancing party.

As they came near, the two seconds took a step forward, and Captain Stallfed, as Lieberg had anticipated, began, after the ordinary salutations, to work his way up to the demand of an apology.

"My friend, Mr. Neville," he said, "has certainly been grossly insulted by your friend, Sir Morley Ernstein. However, as Neville is peculiarly situated in some respects, Colonel Lieberg, I have advised him to content himself with an apology." He paused for a moment, as if to see whether Lieberg would reply; but that gentleman was as silent as the grave; and Captain Stallfed went on, with a slight degree of embarrassment. "A-hem!" he said; "if, therefore, your friend thinks fit to say that he is sorry for having used the threat of horsewhipping my friend Neville, I have advised him to drop the matter, and rest satisfied."

"I think you are labouring under a mistake, Captain Stallfed," said Lieberg; "my friend Sir Morley Ernstein would have the greatest pleasure in saying that he is sorry for having threatened to horsewhip your friend Mr. Neville, if he were at all sorry; but, as he fully did intend to horsewhip him, in case Mr. Neville did not find a gentleman of honour and repute, such as Captain Stallfed, to bring the matter to another issue for him, you will easily perceive that my friend can offer no apology whatsoever."

Stallfed looked a little disconcerted, and merely saying—"Very well, sir—very well!" retired to confer with Neville again, whose eyes, during the brief conversation between his friend and Lieberg, had been round the field, and up the road, and over the hill, with a very anxious and expectant expression. Lieberg marked all this with a smile, saying to Morley—"He is like a cowardly felon at the gallows-foot, asking to be allowed time for another prayer; but we must interrupt his shrift, otherwise I should not wonder if we were interrupted in our proceedings. Captain Stallfed," he said, advancing again a step or two, "we wait your pleasure, and, as it seems to me that your friend is very apprehensive lest we should be annoyed by the Bow-street officers, we had better proceed as fast as possible."

Captain Stallfed bowed, frowned at Neville, and saying, not too low for the other party to hear—"Nonsense—nonsense, man!—the thing must be;" he came forward to make the necessary preparations with Lieberg.

The spot was chosen, the ground measured, and each second threw down a glove, for his friend's standing place, Lieberg calmly overruling a manœuvre of Stallfed's, to place Morley in a line with a tree. In the mean while, the young Baronet walked up and down, with his

arms folded on his chest, thinking the preparations somewhat long, while Neville, with the surgeon at his elbow, stood at some distance, listening to such consolations as the man of healing could give him, and evidently under the influence of no very dignified trepidation. Morley, who, from time to time, cast a glance that way, could not help smiling at the bend of the knees, the rounding of the shoulders, and the wandering eagerness of the eye. He thought every moment, indeed, that his gallant antagonist would take to his heels and run, and probably it was only the proximity of the surgeon that prevented such a consummation. Everything being at length complete, however, Lieberg placed his man, saying—"Now, don't miss him, Morley."

"I don't intend to fire at him," replied Morley.

Lieberg looked at him with astonishment, but there was no time for further explanation, and merely saying—"You are joking, surely!" he withdrew.

In the mean while, Neville, in dead silence, had been brought to his ground, and Stallfed gave him some directions in a low voice. "Is the handkerchief tight round your arm?" he asked—"well, raise your pistol smartly, keep him on the outside of your elbow, and you are sure to hit him. Can't you steady your hand, man? That d—d shaking will ruin you!"

Neville answered not a word, and it is probable that at that moment he neither saw, heard, nor understood. The two seconds, however, retired; and, as it had been arranged that the parties were to fire together, the "one, two, three" was pronounced, and both pistols went off very nearly at the same moment. Neville's, indeed, was a little the first, as he had been instructed by his friend to fire even before the word "three" was pronounced. To the surprise of all parties present, not only did Morley fire directly in the air, but Neville, notwithstanding his terror, his confusion, and his shaking hand, sent his ball with so true an aim, that it passed through Morley's coat, and slightly wounded him, by grazing his right shoulder. Unconscious of his success, however, he fell to the ground at once, as soon as he heard the report of his adversary's pistol; but upon Stallfed and the surgeon coming up, both of whom had clearly seen that Morley had fired in the air, the swindler got upon his feet again, declaring that he had stumbled over a stone.

"Stumbled!" exclaimed Stallfed, in an angry tone; "why what the devil business had you to move at all? I suppose, Colonel Lieberg, as your friend fired in the air, we cannot demand another fire?"

Ere Lieberg could reply, the party in the field was increased by three or four other persons, at the head of whom appeared R——, the Bow-street officer, coming up, as was then usually the case, in encounters of such a kind, somewhat slowly and tardily, to prevent a duel, which had already taken place.

"These, I presume," said Lieberg, as he marked the approach of the new-comers; "these, I presume, are the gentlemen whom your friend expected, and of course we shall have the pleasure of figuring at Bow-street, while you have the satisfaction of seeing the whole in a newspaper."

By the time this was said, the officers were up with them, and gave them intimation that they must present themselves before a magistrate. To Lieberg and Morley, R—— and his companions were perfectly civil and deferential; but with Neville and Captain Stallfed—ay, and with the surgeon those gentlemen had brought thither, the officers were quite friendly and familiar. Promising to appear at Bow-street as soon as the magistrates took their seat in the office, Lieberg and Morley got into the cabriolet, and drove away, Morley tying a handkerchief round his arm to stanch the blood, which was now trickling through his coat. The officers remained with the rest of the party, and R——, with his hands in his breeches pockets, gazed over the chariot and four horses with a cunning smile.

"Why, Nevvy," he said, "this is a flare-up, and will cost you a trifle—I take it!"

"I'll tell you what, R——," said the Captain, "it ought to be worth five hundred pounds to him, if he manages the matter well. Why, having fought a duel with Sir Morley Ernstein, and wounded him in the arm, is enough to make a man of him."

"Hard to do that," said R——, with a knowing look; "why, Nevvy, how did you ever screw yourself up to come to the scratch?—cost you a pint of thunder and lightning, I'll bet. But come, we must be jogging; as the chay is full, I'll get up behind. We won't put the darbies on you, this time, Nevvy; though, if you don't mind what you're about, it'll come to that, I give you warning. I had some talk about you, the other day, with the old gentleman in the wig, and he said, it wouldn't do much longer; so keep quiet, there's a good fellow."

The first case called on before the magistrates that morning, was that of the duel; the tidings of which had spread far and wide through London, before ten o'clock, and the office was consequently full of reporters. The matter was soon settled, in the usual manner; but the magistrate in a grave, but kindly, tone, thought fit to address to Morley a few words of remonstrance, upon the practice of duelling in general, adding a caution, in regard of the choice of associates, while his eye rested with stern severity upon Neville and his worthy second.

"I thank you much, sir," said Morley, with his usual firm and manly manner, "for the warning that you give me; but, you will understand that these persons are not my associates, and not even my acquaintances. I chanced to meet one of them in the commission of acts which I judged imprudent and wrong, and I threatened him with chastisement. As he found a person bearing his Majesty's commission, to act as his friend on the occasion, I thought fit to give him that satisfaction which is usual amongst gentlemen; reserving to myself the right, and holding firmly the determination, of chastising him as I promised, should he give me further occasion for offence."

"I will beg of these gentlemen of the press, to remark," said Lieberg, turning towards the reporters, "that my friend, Sir Morley Ernstein, only consented to meet Mr. Neville, because he did not choose to refuse any man satisfaction when it was demanded; but in order to guard against a bad precedent being established in favour of Mr. Neville, let me add, that I consider him a coward as well as a blackguard, and only regret that my friend treated him with so much lenity."

He was going to add more, but the magistrate interfered, and Lieberg left the place, accompanied by Morley, the former saying, with a laugh—

"It was necessary, my dear Ernstein, to make some observation on the business, which these gentlemen would not very much like repeated, otherwise they would dress up so smart a story of it in the newspapers, that Neville, for the rest of his life, would be treated as a gentleman, and have the privilege of plundering all sorts of young fools with impunity."

Notwithstanding all Lieberg's precautions, the report of the affair in the newspapers, was such as newspaper reports but too frequently are. There was so much truth in the statement as to give it perfect verisimilitude, and to render it impossible to say that it was all a lie, but with so much left untold as to create an impression as erroneous as if the whole had been untrue. It appeared by the report, that Sir Morley Ernstein had fought the well-known Mr. Neville, and had been severely wounded in the arm; that the parties had been brought to Bow-street, and bound over to keep the peace, some sharp words passing between them in the office. The statement ended with the words—"The quarrel, we find, took place about a lady!"

CHAPTER XIV.

AN EXPLANATION.

MORLEY ERNSTEIN cast down the evening newspaper in disgust, and walked up and down the room with angry feelings in his heart, which would not bear control. Whither was it that his thoughts first wandered? The reader need hardly ask—it was to Juliet Carr. As early in the day as the usages of society had permitted, he had called upon Lady Malcolm, but, as almost invariably happens when one has a particular object in seeing any friend, male or female, both Lady Malcolm herself and Miss Carr were reported by the servant to be out. His next visit was to Mr. Hamilton, and there the report was very unfavourable. The next was to a surgeon; for his shoulder, though the wound had been but slight, was becoming very painful. The man of healing, of course, put him to ten times more pain, in order to give him relief; and thus Morley had all the most unpleasant preparatives that a man can have, for seeing his name in a newspaper. He had been disappointed in his expectations—he had been grieved for a friend—he had been put to positive pain himself, and now he saw such an account of an affair, which was assuredly not discreditable to himself, as to produce an impression the most to be dreaded, on the minds of those he loved and esteemed. His imagination was a quick one, and with the rapid magic of thought, he summoned to his mind all that Juliet Carr would think—all that Juliet Carr would feel, on hearing that he had quarrelled with, and fought a swindler, "*on account of a lady!*"

Men little know to what an immense extent their own acquaintance with all the evil and wickedness of the world affects their estimate of other people's thoughts and opinions. Morley Ernstein, himself, though he believed the mind of Juliet Carr to be as pure as that of an angel, fancied nevertheless, that the moment her eye rested upon that paragraph, she would see him in the midst of scenes of vice and licentiousness, quarrelling with a blackleg for an abandoned woman.

Morley was quite mistaken, however. It is true, that scarcely one of all the many male eyes which that day read the news of Bow-street, failed to receive exactly such an impression from the paragraph concerning himself. But what did Juliet Carr think?—Anything but what her lover supposed. Juliet Carr was a great reader of character; she was endowed by nature with that discriminating power—for depend upon it, reader, it is a gift, not an acquirement—which enables us by some traits, often even undefinable to ourselves, and generally totally unnoticed by others, to distinguish at once the innate or habitual springs of action in those with whom we are brought in contact. I know not well, whether that gift be most likely to prove a blessing or a curse. It may often guide our actions, but it seldom guides our affections, and too often renders the struggle between inclination and reason, more painful than it always is. Juliet Carr had discovered very rapidly all the principal traits of Morley Ernstein's character; but even had not that been the case, she was not sufficiently acquainted with the evils of the world in general, to conjure up the picture which Morley supposed would present itself to her imagination.

Thus, when she read the account of the duel, she felt quite certain that the cause of quarrel was some impetuous act springing from a generous impulse. When she came to the fact of his having fired in the air, a smile of pleasure brightened her face, crossing the look of painful anxiety with which she had been reading; but when in the end she found that he was wounded, she dropped the paper from her hand with feelings of mingled fear and sorrow, and with something like self-reproach, as if her counsels of the night before had caused the injury under which he suffered. Taking up the newspaper quickly again, she carried it at once into the neighbouring room, where Lady Malcolm was sitting, and pointing out the paragraph with a pale cheek and an anxious eye, which her worthy cousin did not fail to remark, she asked Lady Malcolm, if she could not send to obtain some more certain information as to the real state of their young friend. Lady Malcolm replied, that she would

write at once, and the letter was accordingly despatched.

It was now about half-past eight o'clock at night, and to make sure of the note being properly delivered, and that a correct account of Morley Ernstein's health should be brought, Juliet's cousin despatched an old and faithful servant of her own, who was well acquainted with good Adam Gray, the young gentleman's attached dependent. In about three-quarters of an hour the man returned, saying, that he had left the note, and that Sir Morley Ernstein must be better, for he had gone out, the waiter said, on purpose to see Miss Barham.

Lady Malcolm remarked that Juliet turned slightly pale, and being the best disposed woman in the world to relieve persons from unpleasant sensations, she replied, "Nonsense! there must be some mistake, William. Did you see old Adam Gray?"

"No, my lady," replied the man; "I did not; but the waiter told me, that Sir Morley had especially directed him, if any one called, to say that he had gone to see Miss Barham."

Lady Malcolm was one of those who make the most of a difficulty by attempting to get over it, and she was in the high road to try whether she could not persuade the man that he was mistaken, when Juliet rose quietly, and went into the other room, as if to seek a book. Her ladyship then saw that there was no need of proceeding further, and suffered her servant to depart.

In the mean while, Juliet rested her hand upon the table in the next room for a moment, and gazed thoughtfully at the lamp. The flame was bright and clear—and whether she found some fanciful affinity between the object on which her eyes were fixed, and that of which her mind was in search, I know not; but certainly at that moment she was seeking for light, upon subjects connected with her own feelings, and with the circumstances round her, and the lamp of the mind had suddenly become dim and shadowy. Now many a reader may think that the question with which she busied herself was, whether Morley Ernstein was really in love with another? whether, after all that his lips had said, and all that his look had said—nay, all that his whole demeanour had said, during the preceding evening, his heart could really be given to a different object—his affections at that very time engrossed by another? Such, however, was not the question that Juliet Carr addressed to herself. It did not at all refer to the feelings of Morley Ernstein. It referred to her own. She asked herself, what it was that made such strange sensations shoot through her bosom, at the thought of his passing that evening with another? She asked herself, why she should feel as if a cold hand pressed her heart, at the idea of his being attached to another? Had she been dreaming? Had she been indulging visions that she had no right to indulge? or, had she really suffered her imagination to be captivated by a wild, gay, ardent young man, who perhaps addressed the same flattery of words and manner to some new acquaintance every night? Juliet Carr was frightened at her own feelings, and for the rest of the evening, though not absolutely melancholy, she was grave and thoughtful.

About eleven o'clock on the following day, Lady Malcolm went out, not telling her fair visitor where she was going at that early hour. It must be recollected, that she was first cousin to Juliet's mother, and her period of life was somewhat more than that mother's age would have been had she been still living. She was, perhaps, forty-eight or nine; and cares and sorrows—those sad beauty-killers—had left her less of the appearance of youth than might have been her portion, if her life had passed smoothly and happily. It was upon the strength of her age, then, that Lady Malcolm now ventured towards Berkeley Square, in order to visit Morley Ernstein, and inquire into his proceedings with her own lips.

In the mean time, however, that young gentleman himself, as so often happens on such occasions, had been impelled towards the house of Lady Malcolm, taking his way, as if on purpose, by streets the most distinct and opposite to those which the good lady herself pursued. He had not the slightest idea, it is true, that there was a chance of her coming to call upon him; but still, if the truth must be told, his heart beat with a pleasurable pulse when he heard that Lady Malcolm was out, and that Miss Carr was at home.

He followed the servant quickly up the stairs, through the first drawing-room, and into the second, where Juliet was busy, writing a letter; so that she scarcely heard his name announced ere he was before her. The colour mounted up into her cheek, a smile came upon her lip, and she received him kindly and courteously; but still there was, in her manner, or at least Morley thought so, a certain degree of coldness, which his warm and eager nature could not endure, even for a moment. Time to think had been allowed him since the first impression, which had been produced upon his mind by reading the newspaper account of his duel with Neville, and various other circumstances had combined, to fix him in a resolution which he now proceeded to execute. He sat down, then, at once beside Juliet Carr, saying—

"You must forgive me for coming at this early hour, and, still further, you must forgive me for preventing you from writing your letter, perhaps for a long time, as I intend to stay here till Lady Malcolm comes back."

There was something in his manner that agitated Juliet Carr, but she would not give way to the sensations of her own heart, nor suffer herself to fancy, for a moment, that there was any other feeling towards her in his than common friendship.

"Indeed, I am very happy to see you," she replied; "we were very anxious to hear of you last night; for we saw, in the newspaper, an account——"

"Of my having become a duellist, notwithstanding all your kind cautions," said Morley.

"Yes," answered Juliet Carr, with a bright smile; "but also of your having acted well and nobly, even though you did yield to the bad influence of man's customs."

"You mean in not firing at my adversary," said Morley. "Well, I will confess to you, that at the moment I was conversing with you, the night before, I had fully made up my mind to shoot him. Nay, more, I thought I should be serving society by so doing."

"Oh, then," exclaimed Juliet, warmly, "I do rejoice that I said what I did, if I am to believe it had any effect upon you. Think, with what different feelings we should now have met, if you had killed that man—think how sad and melancholy you would have been."

"Your words had every effect," replied Morley, "for they entirely stopped me in my purpose, and I will own, now, that I am most glad I listened to them; not only, because it gives me pleasure to have followed your counsel, but because I am satisfied that counsel was right; and now let us speak, Juliet," he continued, "of that newspaper account which you saw of the business, for, believe me, your good opinion is more valuable to me than anything else in life."

Juliet blushed, and her heart beat quickly; but following that first impulse, which generally affects the mind of woman on such occasions, she sought to avoid the more agitating part of the theme, and replied, quickly, "I see that one part of the account must be false; for it stated that you were severely wounded. It was that which made me and Lady Malcolm so anxious to hear how you were. She wrote to you last night, but——"

"I was out," replied Morley, with that straightforward frankness of demeanour, which wrought a change in Juliet's feelings at every word—"I would have come, in answer to her note, myself, but I was obliged to go out, early in the evening, to see a young lady of the name of Barham, whose situation is one which, I think, will interest you deeply when you come to hear the particulars."

Juliet Carr drew a long, deep sigh; her eyes remained fixed upon the table; the fine-turned upper lip quivered, as she listened; and the beautiful nostril expanded, as if some struggling feelings in her breast required more breath in their eager contest.

"It was my intention," continued Morley, "to interest Mr. Hamilton, my former guardian, in this business, and to induce him to do all for Miss Barham that I could wish to do; but he, I am sorry to say, is extremely ill, and I must apply to Lady Malcolm and yourself to help me."

"Oh, that we will, willingly!" exclaimed Juliet. "But what is the matter, Morley?—why cannot you act for yourself? Is this the lady, about whom they say you fought the duel?"

There was a slight smile upon her face as she asked the last question—but each of the three was somewhat difficult to answer, and Morley chose the least.

"It was not exactly about her that the quarrel took place," he said, "though it was in her house. This man, Neville, who is a swindler, had gone there, with purposes which, perhaps, Juliet, I could better explain to Lady Malcolm than yourself. It is sufficient to say, that they were insulting to an innocent and amiable girl, overwhelmed with misfortunes of various kinds: first, the death of her father, a poor, but respectable clergyman, after a long and tedious illness, which exhausted all his resources: next, the pressure of poverty; and last, but greatest of all, the infamous conduct of a brother, who has abandoned himself to every sort of evil, and would sell or betray his sister for a very slight consideration. It was the wish to see if I could do something, both to relieve and reclaim this youth, that took me to Miss Barham's house, when I met the man, Neville, there. I had never beheld her before, but I then saw enough to make me sure that she was innocent and good, and you may easily imagine, that I did not feel disposed to suffer her to be injured or insulted in my presence."

"Oh, no, no!" exclaimed Juliet, enthusiastically, "I am sure you would not—I am sure that you would do everything in your power to protect and assist her."

Somehow or another, I know not well how, Morley Ernstein seemed to feel he had got a little the advantage of Juliet Carr, and he replied, with a smile—

"I am most anxious to do everything; but how it is to be done is the question, Juliet; for I must let you into one secret—this Miss Barham is young and very beautiful."

He saw the colour in Juliet's cheek vary, in a manner that gave him greater pleasure than anything that he had beheld for many a day; and yet he hastened to restore it to a steadier tone.

"There are two difficulties, Juliet," he said; "one of which I do not like to encounter, and one of which I have no right to encounter. You will easily understand," he continued, with a smile, "that I cannot take this pretty Helen Barham to my house, or even send her thither and give her an asylum there, though, for a thousand reasons, it were better that she should leave London. If she remains, I cannot shield her from persecution and annoyance; and my being with her frequently might produce an impression on the minds of others, that my views towards her were of an evil nature; while in herself," he added, slowly and gravely, "it might induce a belief that I am actuated by feelings of personal attachment, which I can never feel. Do not suppose me vain, Juliet; but it is right to remember that, thrown altogether into my society, resting upon me for protection and support, experiencing some kindness from me, and feeling more gratitude than I deserve, she might learn to entertain sentiments that I could never return, and should be deeply grieved to disappoint."

Juliet's lips moved, though there was no sound proceeded from them, but her heart said something that Morley Ernstein might have been glad to hear.

"To speak the truth, Juliet," continued Morley, "it is more lest she should mistake me, than lest others should mistake me, that I am anxious. It so seldom happens that a man is very eager to serve a woman without some motive, that she might well think I am influenced by an attachment to herself, unless—unless—unless, in short, I can find some more proper person than myself to stand prominently forward in this business. Some facts which I heard last night, and which

made me hurry to her instantly, render it the more necessary that she should be removed from her present abode at once."

"Why?" demanded Juliet; "is she in any danger?"

"She is in danger of being placed in the most painful situation possible," replied Morley. "Her brother has thrown himself entirely in the power of the swindler Neville. Their views upon this poor girl are such as I can hardly explain, for there are things which, to ears so pure as yours, are offensive even to hear named."

"Alas!" replied Juliet, looking up in his face, with a sweet yet sad smile, "one cannot live any time in the world, Morley, without being well aware that there are many vices and evils of all kinds going on around us. I am not sure that it would be beneficial to us to be ignorant that such things exist, if they must exist; but, however, I can easily conceive that this man's views and purposes are infamous. The only thing I cannot comprehend is, how a brother can lend himself to disgrace a sister. What can be his inducement? What can be the motive strong enough to lead him to an act which one would imagine the most depraved mind would shrink from with horror?"

"The hope of life, Juliet," replied Morley—"the fear of death. These are his inducements; but that part of the subject I must not touch upon with you. Wherever he is concerned, I will deal with the affair myself, and hope still to save him from the consequences of his own crime and folly. If he cannot be saved, however, we must shield his sister from his importunities; and if you will help me in this—if you will give her your countenance, assistance, and protection, I am sure she will be grateful, and I, Juliet, will be deeply so."

"I will do anything you like," cried Juliet, with a glowing countenance; "I will go to her this moment, if you please. Oh, I forgot I was in London!" she added, sitting down again on the sofa, from which she had partly risen. "But, however, whatever you think best to be done, I am quite ready to do. You know, I believe, Morley, that my means of helping her—in point of money, I mean—are not very large, and that I have some poor pensioners at home, but still I have quite enough to give her assistance for the time, and I shall soon have more."

Morley gazed at her with sensations that kept him silent for a moment. "It is unnecessary," he replied, at length; "I can supply all that. I have far more than I know how to employ properly, Juliet, and, indeed, I think that when I have engaged you so deeply in this affair that you cannot escape me, I shall try to induce you to give me counsel in the disposal of that wealth which is too great not to imply a serious obligation to employ it properly. Will you be my monitor, Juliet?"

Juliet Carr looked down, and again turned pale, saying, in a low voice, "Willingly, Morley, if I could be vain enough to think my counsels would aid or benefit you."

Strange as it may seem, the same sudden paleness which had alarmed Morley Ernstein on the preceding night, making him doubt whether Juliet's heart was free, and resolve to bridle his impetuous spirit and proceed coolly and slowly to ascertain what were her real feelings before he committed himself, lest vanity should meet a rebuff and love a disappointment—the same sudden paleness now produced a contrary effect. During their conference of that morning there had been a thousand little signs, a thousand little passing expressions of the countenance, which had raised hope and expectation. There had been a light in her eyes when she raised them suddenly to his face, a changing colour under his glance, an agitation in the voice, an occasional embarrassment in the manner,—all of which showed Morley Ernstein that he had the power, at least, of producing emotion in the heart of Juliet Carr, and there is something in that power which renders it akin either to love or fear. Morley was very sure that there was no touch of the latter passion in her feelings. He hoped, then, naturally enough, that there might be somewhat of the former. How the matter would have gone on at that moment, Heaven only knows, but just as the words passed Juliet's lips, there was a loud knock at the street-door, and Juliet added—"There is Lady Malcolm!"

There was no time left then for any long explanations, but Morley took the hand which rested on the table—it was certainly a fair book, that might have been kissed by Jews or infidels, with no light devotion—and pressing his lips upon it, he said—"Thus, dear Juliet, I seal your promise."

"What promise?" exclaimed Juliet Carr, with a start and a blush.

"To be my monitor," replied Morley. He would have fain added "for life," but he dared not risk all at that moment, and ere either of them could utter more, Lady Malcolm entered the room.

CHAPTER XV.

MORLEY'S PLANS.

EACH act and fact in human nature, and in human life, is connected by so many links, with everything around, that the man who sets out to tell a history, if he would tell it completely, has as many different threads to follow, as a spider in the middle of his web. If he pursue one for any length without deviating, he finds that he has left forty or fifty other branches on either side, which—each of them more or less—affect the narrative in the end. He has to come back for each, to follow each out carefully, or else some of the meshes in the web will be found broken, when most he wants them. Thus must we return, to take up the history of Morley Ernstein, at that particular point where we left off to expatiate upon men's miscalculations of the thoughts of women, being thence seduced away by very natural inducements, to tell what was really going on in the mind of sweet Juliet Carr; and thence again, as speedily to recount her interview with Morley on the subsequent day.

After having thrown down the newspaper, then, and strode up and down the room for

some time, with indignation and bitterness of heart, Morley began to consider what was the best course for him to pursue in order to prevent such impressions, as he feared had been produced, from becoming permanent in the mind of her he loved. In short, he acted like any other impetuous man. He first became violently angry at the apprehension of an evil, and then, after having wasted half-an-hour in the whirl of passion, began to do what it would have been better to do at first, and think of means to remedy what had gone amiss. He determined, then, as we have seen, to tell Juliet Carr as much as he could tell of Helen Barham's history, and to explain frankly and straightforwardly his whole conduct. The only question was, how was this to be brought about naturally? Juliet Carr would certainly never demand any account of how or why he had fought the duel, or who was the lady to whom the newspapers referred. Nay, more, most probably she would even shrink from the subject altogether, if such suspicions were excited in her mind as he anticipated.

After some thought, the plan suddenly flashed upon his mind, of interesting Lady Malcom, and even Juliet herself, in the situation of Helen Barham, and thus delivering himself from two difficulties at once. What politicians love does make of us! As soon as the idea struck him, he saw the whole benefit of it, and resolved to follow it out immediately. He would break through all ceremony; he would go to Lady Malcolm that very night, and with this view he rang the bell, and asked if he could have his dinner earlier than he had ordered it.

The waiter replied, "Yes, sir;" and, as usual in such cases, the dinner was half-an-hour later than ever. Morley ate it, when it did come, as fast as possible, but he had just concluded when information was brought him, that a gentleman wished to see him upon business, and ordering him to be admitted, with a somewhat impatient expression, Mr. Higgins was ushered in with a deferential air. With that careful eschewance of all listening ears, which was one point of Mr. Higgins's prudence, that gentleman remained bowing in silence, till the waiter was out of the room, after which he approached a little nearer to the table, saying—

"I have done the matter, sir. I can tell you all about it, now; I set somebody to pump Nevvy himself, for I could make nothing of Bill, and I find the lad has done that which shows he prefers hemp to lint any time, by way of a neck-handkerchief. He'll swing, sir—there's no helping it. He'll swing—you'll see," and Mr. Higgins stuck his hands forcibly into his breeches pockets, as the most powerful mode of asseveration which he could adopt. "I don't like exactly to tell you what he's done, sir," he continued, "though I'm sure you wouldn't peach, but still——"

"I know what he has done," answered Morley, calmly; "all I want to know now is, whose is the name he forged?"

Higgins gazed at him in some surprise, at finding that the young gentleman had arrived so rapidly at so dangerous a piece of information.

"Why, sir," he replied, "as you know so much, I might as well tell you all, but yet, when a lad's neck's in jeopardy——"

"All I seek," said Morley, somewhat impatiently, "is the lad's own good. If I cannot benefit him I will not hurt him, depend upon it; so speak out, Mr. Higgins—who is the man?"

"Why, he is a friend of yours, sir," replied Higgins, "that is what makes me so careful."

"Mr. Hamilton!" said Morley, looking in the man's face with consternation; for he well knew that the crime of forgery was one which, in the eyes of the banker, however tender and lenient he was on other occasions, could only be expiated by death. "Mr. Hamilton! That is, indeed, unfortunate!"

"No, no, sir," answered Higgins, "both he and Neville knew better than that. The Colonel, sir—the Colonel's the man. No one would ever believe that any of Neville's party could have a bill of Mr. Hamilton's, but as for the Colonel, sir—the Count, some folks call him—being a little bit upon the turf, and a good deal in the world, and all that, the thing was likely enough."

While the man had been speaking, Morley Ernstein had revolved in his own mind all the consequences of Lieberg's possessing the power of life and death over William Barham. He doubted not, for a moment, that his friend would abandon all thought of proceeding against the unfortunate young man, at his request; but after what had passed between them the morning before, his mind could not help entertaining a fear, that Lieberg might use the hold he had acquired, to the injury of Helen Barham. He knew that Lieberg would think it doing her no wrong, to seek to place her in a situation of affluence and ease, at the expense of what the world in general calls virtue. He could not help acknowledging, too, that Lieberg's chance of success in such a pursuit was very much more probable than that of the man Neville. Strikingly handsome as he was in person, there was a fascination about his manners, a charm in his eloquence, which Morley himself could not resist. What might be the influence of such a man, Morley asked, over a young and inexperienced girl like Helen Barham, when he had the life of her brother in his hands? Morley feared very much for the result. There was nothing to be done, but to remove her speedily and at once from the scene, before the attempt to save her brother was made, and his resolution was taken accordingly.

"There, Mr. Higgins," he said, pushing across a note to that worthy; "there is what I promised; and now tell me one or two things more about this business. First of all, how soon is the matter likely to be discovered?"

"Why, on Saturday, sir," replied Higgins; "I hear it's a promissory note at a month, and it's up on Saturday. Neville has made the boy believe that he can and will stop the thing, but he can no more do that than he can fly. The note is out of his hands long ago. The way the thing was done was very unfair to the lad, too, I hear. He has a great art of imitating any writing he sees, and they got him to copy the Colonel's name, which he had never heard of before, making him think that it was that of somebody

who had been dead a long while. When he found out the trick, however, and was in so great a fright that they thought he would go and blab the whole directly, they coaxed him down by giving him some forty or fifty pounds of the money, which he went and spent directly with a girl named Sally Cole. Neville, too, persuaded him that he would take the bill up, though Neville took care not to be present when William signed the name."

"It is strange," said Morley, "how a set of men, so well known to be scoundrels as these are, can ever get a forged bill like that into circulation."

"Oh, it is very easily done, sir," replied Higgins, "it goes through half a dozen hands, each of whom make a good thing by it. They sold it to a man for half the money, or perhaps less; then he sold it to one of the low regular money-lenders for thirty or forty pounds more. He again sent it to another, who had a somewhat better name; and then, when my Lord This-thing or my Lord That-thing comes to him for four or five thousand pounds, he will give him this bill as part payment. However, they'll soon get hold of poor Bill, for every one of them will give him up, and there are plenty ready to turn evidence against him."

"Then you think there is no chance," said Morley, "of Neville ever recovering the bill?"

"Not he," answered Higgins; "a thousand to one, sir, it is in the hands of some banker by this time, and unless one could prig the clerk's pocket-book, there is no stopping the matter now. The only way would be, to get Bill out of the way, but I doubt if these fellows would let him go; for they know very well, that Sir Richard will have one of them: and as the boy is boots, you see, sir, they think he had better swing early."

"They may find themselves mistaken," said Morley; "however, I must see what can be done. Good night, Mr. Higgins."

"I say, sir," said Higgins, with a sly look, before he departed: "have you got hold of the young lady yet?"

"You mistake, my good friend," said Morley, sternly; "I have no such intentions as you suppose."

"Well, sir," said the man, nothing abashed, "you'll easily manage it if you like. Bill Barham told me he was going to call upon you to-night between seven and eight; and you could easily bring him to terms—that I saw very well. No offence, sir, I hope. Good night."

Morley Ernstein remained standing for a moment in thought. "The girl must be removed," he said, speaking to himself, "and if the youth can be induced to go and confess all to Lieberg, with an offer of repaying the money, I doubt not all may yet go well. When Lieberg finds that Helen Barham is gone, and that even her brother does not know where to find her, he will of course think that I have seduced her, and taken her away. Well, let him do so, for the present! If Lady Malcolm helps me, we will soon convince him of the contrary. In the mean time things must take their course; I will go to her at once, and see if she will put herself entirely under my direction, before I speak with Lady Malcolm."

Ere he set out, he left directions to inform William Barham, if that praiseworthy young gentleman called, that he was gone to his sister's house; and in Davis-street he got into a hackney-coach with the intention of proceeding thither more quickly. That sad and tardy contrivance for wasting men's time, however, was not at all suited to the eager spirit of Morley Ernstein, and ere it had rumbled through more than two or three streets, he made the coachman stop, paid him his fare, jumped out, and proceeded on foot. On arriving at Helen Barham's dwelling, he was admitted instantly; for the maid, who had her own notion of the object of his visits, had heard all about him from the groom, who had accompanied him at first, and judging that the arrangement would do very well, took care to be especially civil to one whom she supposed would be her future master. She even made way for him to go up the stairs before her, and Morley, who was too eager to be ceremonious, passed on, and opened the drawing-room door himself.

Helen Barham had learned to know his knock and his step, however, and with her pencil in her hand, as she sat working hard at a drawing before her, she gazed up with a glad and eager look towards the opening door, to see if her ear had not deceived her. It was by this time night. There might be a ray or two of daylight still in the sky, but not enough for her to see her drawing. The windows therefore had been closed, and the lamp lighted, and as she sat with the rays falling full upon her face, with her bright eyes raised towards the opening door, her lips apart and showing the white teeth, her form bent forward with expectation, and the fair, delicate hand holding the pencil suspended over the paper, certainly nothing more lovely could have presented itself to the eyes of Morley Ernstein. Then came up in her face the light of joy as she saw him, the beaming of gratitude and regard, as if to give sunshine to the picture.

The first reflection that crossed the mind of Morley Ernstein, after the impression of her dazzling beauty subsided, was, how sad and gloomy must her existence have been for many a long day past! The feelings in his heart might well have tempted him to take the stricken lamb to his bosom, to nourish, and to cheer her there, without one evil sensation, or one thought but for her good; and the reader may well pardon him, if—although he was guarded by a passion, intense and true, for another—if, notwithstanding all he could do, there was a tenderness in his manner, a gentle affection in his tone, that was very dangerous to poor Helen Barham. She sprang up, she held out her hand to him, she exclaimed, with a look that told the whole joy of her heart—

"Oh! how glad I am to see you! Do you know, I have found a way of supporting myself quite well, till I can get some more scholars. Since I saw you, I have sold two of my drawings to a shop in Pall Mall, and received two guineas for them. I did not think the things were worth anything, but merely for my scholars to copy;

but as I went past the windows of a drawing shop, I saw some that did not seem better than mine, so I resolved to try. The man gave me two guineas at once, and said he would take as many more as I could bring; so that now, you see, I am rich."

"I am afraid, my dear Miss Barham," said Morley, with a smile, "that I have come to destroy all your fine projects; but, do not be alarmed, it is to substitute others in their place, which, I trust, may not be disagreeable to you."

The sensation of her position in regard to Morley Ernstein, her total dependence, as it were, upon him, the power he seemed to have over her fate, and the right of interfering in it, which he had at once assumed, never seemed to affect Helen Barham painfully when she was pouring forth expressions of gratitude for what he had done, or when showing her thankfulness in word, in look, or in tone. But when he seemed about to propose any line of conduct, or offer any further assistance, a vague sensation of apprehension, as it were, a sort of indistinct consciousness that whatever he asked her, were it right or wrong, she would do, caused the flattering blood to come into her cheek, her heart to beat, and her breathing to grow quick with expectation.

"What is it you wish me to do?" she asked, in a tone that implied, "You have but to tell me, and I will do it."

Morley paused for a moment before he answered. There was something in the whole circumstances of the moment, and especially in the extraordinary difference between the manner with which Helen Barham now received him, and that with which she had first met him some days before, which affected him strangely. Was there again a struggle in his heart? Was there again temptation? Was there again the voice of the earthly spirit prompting him to rush impetuously to the gratification of every impulse without fear or thought of the consequences to himself and others? Reader, we will not pry into his heart too closely; we will not look for that which it might be painful to find. If Morley Ernstein was tempted, he overcame the temptation; nor did it reach such a point, that the better spirit was called to fight vehemently against the adversary.

He paused for a moment, and his heart beat quick—but that was all; and he then explained to Helen that he had discovered the person whose name her brother had so criminally used—that he was a friend of his own—and that he believed, beyond all doubt, he should have the means of inducing him to stop all proceedings against the offender. In the next place, he told her, that he still thought it absolutely necessary, both on her own and her brother's account, that she should immediately remove from her present abode, into the country. He informed her that it was his intention, if possible, to induce William Barham to go abroad to one of the British Colonies, where employment of an honourable kind would be found for him; but, at the same time, he showed her, that if her brother was still suffered to entertain any hopes of concealing the forgery, by playing into the hands of the man Neville, he might be kept lingering on in England till it was too late to save him, and at all events might never be disentangled from the evil companions to whom he had devoted himself. At the same time he urged that the only way to make him abandon every attempt to carry out his infamous bargain with Neville, was to place her beyond his reach altogether, and not even to let him know where she was.

She listened for a moment in silence, with her eyes bent down, and evidently full of thought, and then looked up in his face, with something like a tear upon her eyelashes. "You have been so kind and good," she said, in a faltering voice, "and have shown yourself so generous, that I scarcely ought to ask you any questions, but only, I am afraid—that is to say, having no friend who has yet expressed a willingness to receive me, I think people might judge it strange, if I were to go anywhere with you alone—I mean, under your care—without my own brother knowing it. But I see you are smiling—I have mistaken you. But, oh, no! indeed I have not doubted you—I am sure, Sir Morley Ernstein, you would not wrong me in any way;" and she gave him her hand.

"Not for the world," he replied. "I smiled at myself, Miss Barham—my mind being fully occupied with my own plans for you. I forgot to tell you one half of them, which ought to have been told you at first. My friend Mr. Hamilton's illness has embarrassed me; but there is an excellent lady, an old friend of my mother's, to whom I intend to apply for assistance, which I know she will give, for she is not a little of an enthusiast herself in all that is good, and is ever eager to help misfortune. I will apply to her, and to a young lady who is now with her, an old friend of mine, and I feel perfectly certain—or at least very certain—that they will not refuse to give me every sort of aid in carrying my plans for you into execution. I will go to them early to-morrow, and doubt not soon to bring you back good news from them. But let us consider the worst, my dear Miss Barham: suppose I were to find Lady Malcolm and Miss Carr either not disposed, or not able to afford or ensure you a safe asylum, I still believe that it would be absolutely necessary for you, at any risk, and whatever the world may say, to quit this place, and separate yourself from your brother for a time. There are occasions on which we must brave the world's opinion, when we know that we are doing what is right, when our purposes and views are high and pure, and when, by obeying the cold dictates of society, we should incur still greater dangers, or fall into real errors."

Was the doctrine that he preached a perilous one? Perhaps it might be so—at least, as far as human happiness is concerned; for the laws and customs of the world are exactly like the military code of Great Britain, which strictly forbids a man to fight a duel, and disgraces him if he refuses.

Helen Barham again looked up in his face, and replied, at once—"I will do anything that you please. Tell me what I ought to do! I am sure, as I said before, you will not tell me wrong; and I am sure, also, that when I am

away, however criminal you may think him, you will do the best for my poor brother William."

Morley gave her every assurance. There was much, however, to be thought of—much to be spoken of, between them; and he remained nearly two hours longer with her, in that sort of conversation which, of all others, perhaps was the most dangerous—dangerous, indeed, to her, poor girl! They had to speak of all the subjects most interesting to her—of everything which touched her heart, or her feelings, which awoke memories of the past, hopes of the future, which aroused dreams, expectations, wishes, sensations, many of them still living, many of them gone, and sounding upon the ear of memory like a death-bell in the midst of the night. She had to talk of all these things with a man, young, handsome, graceful, captivating, full of varied powers and rich imagination—her only friend, her preserver, her benefactor. Alas! for poor Helen Barham!

CHAPTER XVI.

JULIET SEEKS HELEN.

SUCH as we have described in the last chapter, had been Morley Ernstein's interview with Helen Barham, on the night preceding his early visit to Lady Malcolm. When that worthy lady herself returned, and entered the room where Morley and Juliet Carr were seated, she might well assure him that she was delighted to see him; for she was truly delighted to see him there, in that exact spot, seated by Juliet's side; and yet had she known that he was there, she certainly would not have seen him at all, for she would not have come home for an hour. Lady Malcolm loved Juliet Carr sincerely; she loved Morley Ernstein, too, with affection that had been going on and increasing from his childhood. She thought it the most natural thing in the world that they should love each other, and she was quite sure, to see them wed each other, would very greatly contribute to her own happiness. Whenever circumstances were in such a predicament, Lady Malcolm, who, in these respects, was the wisest as well as the kindest woman in the world, made a point of getting out of the way of the lovers as fast and as far as possible, but, in the present instance, she discovered her young friend's visit too late.

Morley's story was quickly told, and Lady Malcolm soon became deeply interested in the fate of Helen Barham. She had lived long enough in the world to comprehend, at a word, the views of Neville, and the sort of danger from which Morley sought to screen the fair being he had befriended. To say sooth, on the mind of Lady Malcolm, the newspaper account of the duel had in some degree produced the effect which Morley had expected it would produce on every one. The bold and candid way, however, in which he now told who the lady was, and how the duel had arisen, not only removed all suspicions from Lady Malcolm's thoughts, but prevented anything like apprehension of Morley's being seriously attached to any one else than Juliet Carr; which—to acknowledge a sad truth—would have been more painful to her, than if her young friend had really been engaged in some passing intrigue; for Lady Malcolm was one of those who, from seeing a great deal of the dissipated society of a court and a metropolis, believed that every young man must and would commit a certain portion of vices and follies; forgetting that those vices and follies, though we may turn from them at an after period and learn to do better, leave behind them stains of two kinds—stains upon our happiness and upon our candour—not only regrets, but suspicions—not only the memory of evil acts, but the knowledge of wickedness and of crime. The tree of which man rebelliously ate in the garden of Eden, was called the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Had our unhappy first parent paused to consider, he would have known that he possessed already the knowledge of good, and that the prohibition of God referred, in fact, to the tasting of that which could give him the knowledge of evil. He did eat, and the stain of that fruit came upon his soul; and so is it with every child of man; we cannot know evil without a spot remaining on our hearts for ever.

However, such was Lady Malcolm's code, in respect to the license allowed to men, and such, alas! is the code of many another excellent woman. She was glad, indeed, to find that it was not the case with Morley Ernstein; but she was still more glad to find, as I have said, that the cause of the duel was no serious attachment on the part of Morley Ernstein to any other lady than Juliet Carr, and she now most willingly entered into all his views with the zealous benevolence and kind feeling which she displayed in all cases, even when her judgment was not so much in the right as it was in the present instance.

"I will go and see her immediately, my dear Morley," she said; "and I and Juliet will settle the whole affair with her in five minutes. As you say, it would be very improper for you to take her into the country yourself. Why what would the people say, Juliet?—And then he might fall in love with her, you know," she added, laughing.

But Morley answered at once—"There is no fear of that, my dear Lady Malcolm. I have a buckler against all such dangers. A shield that was given me accidentally on the very day after I came of age—under my own park wall too," he added, turning towards Juliet Carr.

But her eyes were bent down upon the back of a book which she was examining attentively, and she only raised them when Lady Malcolm asked—"Well, Juliet, won't you come upon this good errand? Though I don't know, I am sure, where we can place her for the time. Must it absolutely be in the country, Morley? Why could it not be here? She could have a bed in the little room next to yours, Juliet; and be quite as well as in the country."

"For a day or two," replied Juliet, to whom she looked as if for approval of her plan; "but I think not for long, my dear cousin. The object is, you see, to remove her from her brother. Now as long as she remained entirely in the

house, that object would be attained here, but the first time she went out she might meet him; and one could not keep the poor girl a close prisoner.—I will write to my father," she continued; "there are many rooms in our house that are never used at all."

"Oh, my dear Juliet!—write to your father!" exclaimed Lady Malcolm, with some warmth—"write to your father! You know him as well as I do, and that he would not give you board and lodging yourself, if you did not pay him."

Juliet coloured painfully; and Lady Malcolm, perceiving that she had hurt her, said—"Forgive me, dear Juliet, I did not mean to grieve you."

"You do not quite know my father," said Juliet Carr, gently; "but I think I can arrange the matter with him so that he will willingly receive Miss Barham for a month or two."

Lady Malcolm looked at her, divining what she intended to do, and said—"You are a good girl, Juliet; but you must not be a hypocrite with me. Write to your father, and if you find any difficulty, let me know. We can easily manage the matter together then. The season is now at an end, or nearly so; I must go out of London very soon, and I can take you both with me. Nay, do not shake your head; I am very poor I know, but you shall bear half the expense, heiress!"

"And, pray, what share am I to bear in this business?" said Morley, laughing. "You forget, my dear Lady Malcolm, that all I desired, and all I can consent to, is, that you and Miss Carr should kindly shield the reputation of the whole party, by giving that protection to this poor young lady, which I, as a man and a young man, should not be permitted to do by this good meddling world. I must insist, that whatever expense is incurred in the matter, may fall upon me. I know already," he added, "how many claims there are upon this sweet lady's bounty. I have heard of all her good doings round Yelverly."

"Very little are they, indeed," said Juliet, with a sigh; "I wish I could do more. Still I have enough to bear my part in this kind act which you have devised for us, and dear Lady Malcolm will not be satisfied without doing something, too; so you must be content, Morley, with your fair third—and now I will go and get ready to accompany you at once," she added, speaking to Lady Malcolm.

As soon as Juliet was gone, and after a note had been despatched to Helen Barham, at Morley's suggestion, to make her aware of the intended visit, a fit of prudence suddenly seized upon Lady Malcolm, which threatened to be very severe, as, to say sooth, such fits were few and far between. Morley knew how to quiet the awakened demon, however, and when Lady Malcolm asked him anxiously—"Now, are you quite sure, Morley, that this girl has nothing of the impostor about her, that she is quite the sort of person she ought to be?"

"Perfectly certain, upon my honour," replied Morley. "Put your mind perfectly at ease, my dear Lady Malcolm, I have not been deceived, depend upon it."

"You are very young in the world, Morley," said the good lady, still a little doubtfully; "and, remember, I am going to take Juliet with me."

"You may, with all safety," answered Morley Ernstein. "Indeed, dear Lady Malcolm, I wish you would, for many reasons; and, believe me, neither you yourself, nor her very best and dearest friends, could have such a tender regard for Juliet Carr's reputation and conduct as I have."

"Oh, indeed!" exclaimed Lady Malcolm, with a look of satisfaction; "if that be the case, then I am perfectly content. But you must have made quick progress, Morley!"

Morley saw that the good lady had put a much wider construction upon his words than he intended, and not knowing how far her view of the matter might spread ere long, he thought it better to limit her imagination to the truth at once, although he certainly had no inclination to make a confidant of his love, while it was yet so new.

"Now, do not, my dear Lady Malcolm," he said, taking that tone of affectionate playfulness which he often assumed towards his mother's friend; "now, do not tell all the world that I am Juliet Carr's accepted lover, for such, I can assure you, is not the case, and you may break many a heart for nothing. I do not even yet know that she is not engaged to some other man."

There was a sort of cloud came over Morley's brow as he spoke the last words, which gave Lady Malcolm an insight into what was passing in his heart, and that advantage over him which such an insight always affords to woman in her dealings with man.

"It would break your heart, Morley, would it not," she asked, laughing, "if such were really the case? Well, I should not wonder—she must have plenty of lovers, and who can tell?—But never mind! Go along, foolish boy! Were you never told when you were young something about jesting with edged tools? Take my word for it, Morley, it is fully as dangerous for a lover of one-and-twenty to venture a joke in regard to his love, as for an infant to play with a razor—especially when he speaks in the presence of a woman! You do not at all believe that Juliet Carr is engaged, only you wish to be made quite sure that she is not. I have a good mind to punish you for your pride, by telling you nothing upon the subject. However, I always spoiled you, and gave you too many sweetmeats when you were a boy; and so I must divulge, I suppose, that I know she is not engaged—either heart or hand. But that is not to say she will accept you, if you propose to-morrow. Indeed, I do not think she will.—But here she comes; so now you leave us, for we do not intend to take you with us to see this pretty lady."

Morley accordingly took his leave, and Lady Malcolm proceeded with Juliet to the house of Helen Barham. They were on foot with a servant behind them, for Lady Malcolm, as she had said, was not rich, and did not keep a carriage. The position of the house, its distance from the part of the world they were accustomed to frequent, and the appearance of several streets which they passed through to arrive at it, caused good Lady Malcolm's heart to sink a little; and, like a cowardly child, who has determined rashly to brave the terrors of the churchyard by night, she was almost tempted

to turn and to run away before she reached the place itself. The greater air of respectability, however, which the street displayed when she did arrive at it, and the neatness of the house to which she had been directed, revived her very much; while Juliet, unconscious of all that had been passing in her companion's mind, looked up to the windows, somewhat tired with a long walk through the streets of London, and congratulated herself upon having reached the place at length.

The door was opened by the usual maid-servant, who seemed somewhat surprised to see two ladies of such an appearance, and their names being given, she ushered them up to the drawing-room. The note, which Lady Malcolm had sent, was on the table when that lady entered; and beside it, Helen Barham hastily laid down a newspaper. Her eyes were looking wild and agitated, and they fixed upon the visitor with an inquiring look, as if her coming, notwithstanding the note, was quite unexpected.

Juliet had delayed a moment in order to give Lady Malcolm, who had lost some activity with years, time to climb the stairs, and before the younger lady appeared, the kind-hearted widow had taken Helen by the hand, and was saying a thousand gentle and tender things to her, telling her how highly Sir Morley Ernstein had spoken of her, and what an interest he had created for her, in the bosom of herself and Miss Carr.

Helen was very much agitated with emotions of many kinds, and during the few minutes that followed, those emotions increased every instant. She had just been reading, for the first time, the account of the duel between Morley and Neville; and the danger he had run, the wound he had suffered and had never mentioned to her, as well as the thought that it was in her defence that he had fought, had created in her mind a world of apprehension and gratitude, which was well-nigh overpowering her at the moment the door of the room opened. Then, again, the kindness of Lady Malcolm, the benevolence of her demeanour and her tone, all moved her in another manner, so that the tears were in her eyes when Juliet entered. Helen suddenly turned her look from Lady Malcolm to Juliet, and those two beautiful beings stood gazing the one at the other, as if in surprise at each other's loveliness; but—whether it was that Helen read her fate in the exquisite and high-souled beauty of Juliet Carr, or whether it was that, agitation after agitation, and one emotion upon another, was more than her overwrought mind could bear, I cannot tell—she grew gradually paler and paler, and then sank down upon the floor, her fair head falling back upon the sofa behind her.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE FORGED BILL.

All had gone well with Morley Ernstein's plans. Lady Malcolm and Juliet Carr had remained with Helen Barham some time, had tended her with care and kindness, and had entered into every arrangement with her for the purpose of removing her speedily from the situation in which she was placed. Each became interested in her almost as much as Morley himself, for there was in her that quality which does more to prepossess than even beauty itself, and which may be called engagingness. She remained very sad indeed, during the whole of the conversation with those two ladies; but that sadness seemed to them so natural under the circumstances, that it produced no surprise, and excited no suspicion, as to what might perhaps be the real cause thereof. It was settled that she was to come to Lady Malcolm's house the next day, and to remain there till Juliet received an answer from her father, or till Lady Malcolm herself could execute her scheme of quitting London for a short period.

Thus, then, as I have said, Morley's plans were proceeding as prosperously as could be; but, alas! how often, and how sadly does it happen, that the shoals and rocks of disaster lie close to the port of success! It is strange to see how very, very frequently, at the very moment that all seems sure to the eye of human calculation, the will of God disappoints man's expectations, and the voice of fate proclaims—"It shall not be!" Wisely and excellently, we know, it must be so ordained; and human presumption certainly requires such checks, however painful they may be.

Morley Ernstein had heard from Lady Malcolm all that had been done; and a sort of feeling, which he could not very well define, prevented him from going to see Helen Barham that day. We, however, may well inquire, though he would not, what was the nature of his sensations? Was it that her society, with the constant consideration of sorrows, and painful circumstances, was becoming at all wearisome to him? Not at all. It might have been so with some men, with those who are volatile as well as eager, the straw-fire of whose enthusiasm is quenched as soon as lighted. But such was not the case with Morley Ernstein. He was, as we have seen, often struggled for by two spirits, but both spirits were powerful and resolute, and their action was to give energy and perseverance to all he undertook.

Was it that he himself, notwithstanding his love for Juliet Carr—love, which was every moment becoming more ardent and passionate—felt in the society of Helen Barham a charm that he would not indulge in?—that there was a pleasure in soothing and consoling her, a degree of excitement in sitting beside her, talking with her over all her inmost feelings, dwelling with her upon the past, consulting with her upon the future—a sentimental luxury, if we may so call it, in the very tenderness of his compassion which he knew to be dangerous, if not wrong?

Perhaps it was so. There was a vague impression upon his mind that it was something like wronging Juliet Carr to give so much of his tenderness to another; and the higher spirit having then the power, he resisted his inclination, and did not go. But that fact itself made him listless.

Morley remained in his own room, writing

and reading, and had not been out since he left Lady Malcolm, when a note was brought up in Lieberg's handwriting. It was to the following effect:—"My dear Ernstein,—If you dine at home, will you let me share your dinner, for I have something of importance to say to you." Morley instantly wrote to beg him to come; and a few hours after, he and Lieberg were seated together at the social meal, waiting till the servants had taken their departure ere they approached the business which the visitor had to speak upon.

"This trout is excellent," said Lieberg; "your host shows his taste, Morley, in giving you trout instead of sea-fish at this season of the year. Sea-fish is intolerable at Midsummer, and especially as you English people dress yours. Who could endure the thought of frying and grease; or even of boiled fish and lobster sauce, cayenne pepper, and anchovy, and all the concatenation of horrors which follow the invariable dish of fish, at an ordinary English table. Trout or smelts are the only things tolerable at this season of the year. I must have had a presentiment that you would have trout to-day, when I invited myself to dine with you. Do you give in to the doctrine of presentiments, Morley?"

"All men, I suppose, have a vague superstition of the kind in regard to great events; but I do not think, Lieberg, that supernatural warnings would be wasted upon a dish of trout."

"I don't see why," replied Lieberg. "These little things are great to little men; and if, as I believe, the whole universe around us swarms with kindred spirits, only separated from us by the thin partition of our mortal clay, interesting themselves in our happiness, and giving us intimation of things that affect our present state, I do not see why one of these same aërial brethren of ours should not tap at the wainscot to tell me that there is a dish of trout, or any other little pleasant sin, awaiting me at the house of my friend."

Morley smiled in spite of himself; for the knowledge that Lieberg had come to speak to him upon some important business, and the fact of being obliged to wait till after dinner to know what that business was, oppressed his eager spirit, and occupied his thoughts too much for him to relish any ordinary conversation. "I should not think," he replied, "that they would take the trouble of knocking at all, except upon great occasions."

"True," replied Lieberg. "But men's estimation of what are great occasions is various. Some may think death itself but a light thing, and a bad dinner a very serious one. I do not know that I am not of that opinion myself. I certainly know one thing—that I would rather die a thousand times, than live on, forty or fifty years, gorging fat pork every day, as I have seen your peasantry in Hampshire."

Adam Gray, who stood behind his master's chair, and the waiter, who was taking away Lieberg's plate, were both on the broad grin; but he went on, with the same grave face, treating habitually the servants who were in the room exactly as if they had no being for him, except in so far as the moving about of various objects in the room was concerned.

"But tell me, Ernstein," he said, "now that we are talking metaphysically, are you not a predestinarian?—but, indeed, I am sure you are."

"In truth, my dear Lieberg," replied Morley, "I think we know very little of the matter. I believe in God's overruling providence. I believe in his foreknowledge of all that must take place. I believe that it is by his will or permission that it does take place; but still I believe in man's responsibility for his own actions, and in his perfect freedom to choose between good and evil!"

"And in that of spirits, too?" demanded Lieberg, gravely.

"Really, I have never considered the matter, with reference to such personages as that," replied Morley, with a laugh. "I think it better to mind my own business, and not to pry into their affairs. But really, Lieberg, your mixture of moral philosophy and roast lamb, metaphysics and mint sauce, is too German for my English understanding."

Lieberg in turn laughed, saying—"It is not very usual table-talk, I confess, but it was suggested to me by the subject that brought me here to-day. One part of my creed is, that persons who are destined to affect each other's fate, are generally brought together by a power manifestly superior to their own will, and that—struggle against it as much as we please—the overruling hand which is upon us links in act with act, life with life, and circumstance with circumstance, in such a manner as to connect two persons together in particular events by means the most unlikely."

"Well!" exclaimed Morley, eagerly, and with his curiosity greatly excited—"well, Lieberg, what then? How does this bear upon the matter?"

"Why, I think, my dear Morley," replied Lieberg, "that you and I seem destined by fate, though, perhaps, not by disposition, to act together. Our first acquaintance was strange. The singular accident that happened to you; the danger that you ran; the fit of sickness that followed; my having a week or ten days to spare, for the purpose of nursing you;—all gave a marked commencement to our intimacy; and now, many other things are combining to compel us, whether we will or not, to co-operate in matters of some moment."

"Indeed!" said Morley. "Can you not tell me in what respect?"

"Not just at present," replied Lieberg. "But, to look once more to the past, I can recollect various curious circumstances which brought about our first meeting in the coach, and without which it could not have taken place. It hung upon the balance of a straw, whether I should go back to Germany in the end of April last, or whether I should go to the south of France, when, meeting a young fisherman accidentally at dinner, I was captivated by his account of fly-fishing in the north, and went to bestow my idleness there. Then, again, I had actually taken my place in the coach from York to London for the preceding day; but a packet of letters which I expected, was delayed for two or three hours, by some accident happening to the mail, and I lost my place and my money rather than come

away without them: otherwise we should, in all probability, never have met."

Morley paused, and pondered over the past. He, too, recollected the accidental circumstances which had prevented him from taking post-horses and coming to town in his own carriage, and he could not help acknowledging that there was something strange in the whole affair.

There was something strange—there is something strange in every mesh of the fine net-work of fate, for the eye of him who examines it curiously; and every part of every man's history, if he could trace the connection with other parts, would present points as curious and interesting as those to which Morley's attention was now called. He did not reply, however, directly to Lieberg's observations, and both falling into a reverie for a few minutes, went on towards the conclusion of their dinner very perseveringly. At length the dishes were taken away, the wine set upon the table, and the room cleared. No sooner was this done, than Morley burst forth impetuously—"Now, Lieberg—now, what is it? I am anxious to hear."

Lieberg smiled, replying—"I see you are, Morley, and I will not keep you in suspense a moment longer.—I did not know that this man had such good claret—this is real La Tour.—Well, you recollect the story you told me about your quarrel with Neville, and the wild young scamp you wanted to save from what old ladies call 'his evil courses,' and his pretty sister, and the whole of that business?"

"Yes," replied Morley, impatiently, "I recollect very well. What of that?"

"Why, simply this," replied Lieberg—"I find that there is floating about London a note, or draft or bill of exchange, or something of that kind, for five hundred pounds, purporting to be from my hand. Now it so happens, that being tolerably well to do in this world of ours—that is to say, having perhaps a thousand a year more than my habits or wishes require—I never gave such a thing to any man on earth; and having received intimation of the fact, I caused inquiries to be quietly made, as to the person who had taken this unpleasant liberty with my name. I have obtained pretty good information upon the subject, and I find that there is little or no doubt that the forger is no other than your friend and protégé, William Barham.

Few things on earth could have been more painful to Morley Ernstein at that moment than to find that full information regarding the crime and the criminal had reached Lieberg's ears from any other lips than his own. I have already shown the nature of his apprehensions in respect to his friend's future conduct; but his mind was too candid and straightforward to shuffle or palter with the open facts in any way, and he replied, after a very brief pause given to thought, "I am afraid what you have heard is quite true, Lieberg. I had intimation of the fact likewise, and intended to speak with you about it to-morrow. I trust and hope that you will not think of proceeding against this young man, and all I can say is, that I am quite willing to pay the money myself, if you will consent to receive the bill without disowning the signature."

Lieberg laughed. "Oh!" replied he, "you value the young lady's smiles at five hundred pounds, do you, Morley? Well, if such be your arrangements, I will do whatever I can."

Morley paused, and there was a strong struggle in his mind. He knew what Lieberg suspected; and he believed that a strange view of honour, not uncommon in the world, would both prevent his friend from interfering in any way, if he thought that Helen Barham was likely to become connected with him by the ties of illicit love, and would make him consent to receive and pay the forged bill, and, in fact, enter into all those arrangements most to be desired for her very benefit. He was strongly tempted, it must be acknowledged, to suffer Lieberg to remain in the belief which he evidently entertained. But the idea of a falsehood, even implied, was so repugnant to his principles, that he would not admit it into any part of his conduct.

"You are mistaken, Lieberg," he said, at length. "I still tell you, as I told you before, that I have no such purposes towards Miss Barham as you suppose. I wish to spare her the agony of seeing her brother die upon the gallows. I wish to save the unfortunate lad himself, who is a mere boy, and has been misled by others. But I tell you fairly, I have no intention whatsoever of even attempting to injure this poor girl in the way you mean, nor do I think there would be the least chance of success, even if I were to try. She is a girl of good principles, of firm character, and seems to have monopolized the whole of the high feelings which Nature intended for her brother and herself."

"You will certainly not succeed," answered Lieberg, in a calm and reasoning tone, "if you leave her any hope of your marrying her. If her brother were hanged, or transported, or anything of that kind, the disgrace would so strongly forbid the bans, that she would lose the expectation, and yield to your views very readily, depend upon it. Indeed, seriously, I think that it would be far the best arrangement for all parties. The youth would only have one light swing between heaven and earth, very soon over, which would relieve him from a multitude of cares. The young lady would be placed under the protection of a gentleman and a man of honour, one who has generously befriended her, who would treat her well and tenderly, and provide for her when it was necessary for them to part; instead—as will most certainly happen, if you do not take her—instead of her falling into the power of some other man, who may be a rascal and a scoundrel, who may ill-treat and abuse her even while they live together, and abandon her to the public streets when he is tired. You will place yourself in the situation that nine young men of fortune out of ten are placed in, with only this difference, that instead of an opera dancer, a chorus singer, a stage soubrette, or any other mercenary woman, you will have a companion really attached to you, and influenced by gratitude and affection."

"Do you know, Lieberg," exclaimed Morley, "that I have scarcely patience to sit and listen to you. I tell you that I have no such intentions as you suppose. I tell you that I shall never dream of entertaining them; and that whatever

may happen to the young man, Mr. Hamilton, myself, and two or three other people, whom I have engaged or will engage in the business, will take ample care that no temptation—at least in the shape of poverty and exposure—shall ever be thrown in Miss Barham's way, either to become the mistress of an unprincipled scoundrel, or be thrown upon the public streets. Pray speak to me no more upon such a subject, or, on my honour, I shall think you the Devil himself."

Lieberg burst into a fit of laughter. "Well, Morley," he said, "if you will not take the opportunity that offers, I cannot help it; but, really, the chances in my own favour are now so great, that I, who have not such powers of resisting temptation as you have, must yield a little."

"Lieberg!" exclaimed Morley, starting up, and laying his hand upon his arm, "you promised me——"

"Ay," replied Lieberg, "but our position is very much changed now. I have now become a party interested, without seeking it."

"And will you," exclaimed Morley Ernstein—"and will you really follow the base example of that man Neville, and trade with the brother's blood, for the purpose of taking the sister's honour?"

"Sir!" exclaimed Lieberg, raising his head, and gazing at him for a moment, with his dark eye flashing fiercely. But the next instant he recovered himself; his brow lost its frown, his eye its fire, and he replied, "No, Morley, no. Put that on one side altogether, and rest satisfied that, as far as depends upon me, her brother does not die. I do not intend to trade with her fears, whatever I may do with her gratitude."

"Then you assure me he shall be saved," said Morley.

"Nay," answered Lieberg, "I cannot promise that."

"Why not?" demanded his friend. "I am sure, Lieberg, you will not act ungenerously by him. Be generous at once, and let it not be said that you did a noble and kind act by halves. Save the youth, even though he be criminal, and aid me also in placing him in such a situation as to remove him from temptation to commit such acts again. Leave this poor girl to those who will do all that is possible to raise her rather than to sink her, to soften her present fate, and make her forget the many sorrows that have already befallen her. Indeed, indeed, Lieberg, she has suffered bitterly in heart and spirit, and cruel would that man be who would open before her a path, beginning in sin, going on in self-reproach, and ending in disappointed affection and unavailing remorse."

"Well," answered Lieberg, after a moment's thought, "I promise you, firmly and fully, as far as it is possible for me, to save this young man. In regard to my further conduct in the business, I will make no promises of any kind. I will be guided by circumstances, and no one has a right to demand anything further of me. I confess I have become interested in the girl from your account of her, and I shall certainly like to see her; but you mistake me if you suppose that I am deliberately planning the seduction of a woman I have never beheld. Besides, I take it for granted, from all you have said, that she is as much in love with you as you seem to be with her, otherwise I think she must be a very hard-hearted sort of person. If she be in love with you, she is, of course, not likely to fall in love with me, and the matter will, doubtless, end as it has begun. So set your mind at ease, for she has three strong safeguards. If I find that she loves you, I shall stop short, for I never rival my friend; if I find that she is coy, I shall stop short, for I love not maids that are long a wooing: and if I find that she is in no way coy, perhaps I may not love her the better either. So rest satisfied, my young Don Quixote."

Morley, however, was not satisfied, and he determined to hasten by every means in his power the arrangements which would place Helen Barham at a distance from a more dangerous pursuer than Neville. On another point, too, he was not satisfied—namely, with regard to the conditional sort of manner in which Lieberg spoke of saving William Barham. He did not see why the promise should not be positive, and he said, after thinking over all that had passed for a moment,

"You mistake, Lieberg, in regard to my being the least in love with Miss Barham; depend upon it, if I were, I should take a different tone with any one who spoke lightly of her. I am not the least in love with her and never shall be. But, putting that aside, let me ask why you speak of saving William Barham conditionally; of doing what you can; of doing all that depends upon you? Why cannot you certainly save him, by destroying at once the forged draft, or whatever it may be, if I am willing to pay the money?"

"The latter part will be an easy business," replied Lieberg, "for I am not very penurious, myself, Morley; and, though it is entirely at your intercession I do it, yet, if I am able to save him, nobody pays the money but myself. Why I speak conditionally is, simply because, in this business, I have not the absolute disposal of the young man's fate. Other people know the facts besides myself. My banker, when the bill is presented, will see that it is not my handwriting directly. Several of the officers of Bow Street are already aware of the business. There is such a thing as compromising felony, I have heard, in your law, and I can only do for him that which will not bring me under the arm of Justice myself. Let me warn you also to be careful, Morley, for we may get ourselves into difficulties, from which we shall not easily be extricated."

Morley mused, embarrassed; he had never thought of the circumstances that Lieberg brought at once before his view, and all he replied, for several minutes, was,

"The fact of the officers being aware of this has, I suppose, prevented him twice from coming when he promised. He has called here more than once at my request; but never at the hour stated."

"He is afraid of being taken in a trap," said Lieberg; and then falling into thought again, he suffered Morley to pursue his meditations uninterrupted. At length, however, he held out his

hand to his young friend, saying, "Come, Ernstein, let us act together, we have had a little spar, but we will be friends again. You fancy me a much greater *roué* than I am, simply because I am charitable towards all human failings, and because I advised you to do what I judged the best for you—what I thought, and do still think, would be no great harm to any one. For my own part, I am a very moderate man in my views, I can assure you—a quiet, calm, sober, steady person, who, upon principle, never do anything *éclatant*, except when people drive me to it by trying to pull me back. Let us consider, then, what can be best done for this young man."

Morley shook his hand warmly, saying, "I believe, Lieberg, you have the vice of making yourself appear much worse than you really are; and I do not always feel sure whether you are not jesting with me, in advocating things that I never see you plunge into yourself."

"There may be a little joke in the matter," said Lieberg, "for depend upon it, Morley, men who have seen a great deal of the world, and have got the ferocity of their virtue softened down, feel a little inclined to sport with those who come upon them full of the sweets of innocence, and thinking every peccadillo a mountain of iniquity. But now, as I have said, let us consult what may best be done to save this youth from the gallows which he so well merits."

The consultation between them was long, and at length it was determined, that Lieberg should use every means to get hold of the forged document; that he should pay it, if presented, without hesitation; that, if possible, William Barham should be brought to confer with the two friends; that the spurious bill should be shown to him, and that it should be made a *sine quâ non* of his being forgiven, to go out immediately to the East or West Indies, where some situation was to be found for him. Pains were also to be taken to stop all inquiries on the part of the police, and Lieberg joined so heartily in every part of the scheme, that he left Morley with the charm of his influence fully re-established, and the mind of his young companion convinced that he had done him some wrong in the suspicions he had entertained.

CHAPTER XVIII.

LIEBERG AND HELEN.

WHAT was it carried Morley Ernstein to the door of Helen Barham's house at so early an hour on the following day? Was it that his resolution had given way, and that the attraction which was about her had prevailed, notwithstanding all the considerations which had restrained him on the preceding day? If the angels are permitted to look into men's hearts, and see with their eyes of light, the motives, as well as the actions to which they lead, it must always afford a curious and sometimes an amusing, though very often a sad speculation to the bright beings above us.

So seldom does it happen, that man cannot find a valid excuse to his own understanding for following his own inclinations, that it is not to be wondered at that Morley Ernstein drew out of his conversation with Lieberg on the preceding evening, a valid excuse for visiting Helen Barham. I do not mean to say, indeed, that he was wrong; but one thing is certain, his inclinations led him thither, as well as his reason, and he was not sorry that a just motive impelled him to go. Dear reader, it was very natural, and certainly not in the least blamable; nor does it prove in the slightest degree that his affection wavered from Juliet Carr. See was certainly a bright, a beautiful, and an engaging creature, that he went to see; but to Morley Ernstein, she was the creature of his compassion, of his benevolence, of his tenderness. "We take a withering stick," says Sterne, "and plant it in the ground, and then we water it, because we planted it."

Such was the case with Morley Ernstein, and now he went to do one of the most difficult things on earth; to guard Helen Barham against Lieberg, and yet not to assail the character of his friend. As usual, he was admitted at once, for Helen was now rarely out; but when he entered the drawing-room, and saw her, he could not help thinking that there was some difference in her manner towards him—at least it appeared so at first. There was a timidity, a shrinkingness—if we may use the expression—a faltering of the voice, a dropping of the eye, a want of that frank and straightforward pouring forth of excited and grateful feelings, which had hitherto characterized the whole demeanour of Helen Barham towards himself.

It puzzled Morley Ernstein; he could not understand the change. Perhaps the reader can; at all events he will easily do so when he is told, that Helen had been looking into her own heart, and inquiring what were her feelings really towards the man who now stood before her. Her emotion at the sight of Juliet Carr had first shown her that there were strange things in her own bosom, and she had passed a sleepless night, thinking of but one subject on earth—Morley Ernstein.

She gave him her hand, however—a hand which was usually as cold as the marble from which, to judge by the colour, it was formed; but that hand was now burning with fiery heat, and the once rosy cheek had become much paler. As Morley felt that feverish touch, and gazed on her face, the cause of the difference in manner he had observed, seemed at once to display itself.

"You are ill, Miss Barham," he exclaimed with an eager and an anxious look, that made Helen's heart beat fast, and her knees tremble under her. "For Heaven's sake let me send for a physician."

"Oh, no, no!" she exclaimed, "I am quite well, indeed."

"Then what makes your hand burn so?" he demanded, still holding it in his own, "and what makes you look so pale?"

"I did not sleep very well last night," she said; "there had been a good deal to agitate me during the day, and I lay awake thinking, anxiously enough."

"And of what were you thinking?" demanded Morley, leading her to a sofa, and seating him-

self beside her. "Nay, you must tell me; for perhaps I can relieve some of your anxiety."

Helen hesitated, and he added, "Nay, you must tell me; you will not surely refuse?"

"Refuse!" she exclaimed; "do you think I would refuse you anything, after all you have done for me?" She paused for a moment, but then, seeming to take a sudden resolution, she looked up, saying, "I was thinking of you—I only heard yesterday of your having fought that wretched man Neville, and risked your life on my account. I pondered upon many things, but that was one of those I thought most of during the night; and I asked myself, what would have become of me if you had been killed?—I think I must have died."

Morley felt that both Helen and himself were standing on dangerous ground. He was half sorry that he had come at all; but, shutting his eyes resolutely to all that he feared to see, he replied gravely, though in the same kind tone he always used towards her, "I had not forgotten, Miss Barham, the situation in which you were placed, and that it might be aggravated by the very fact of an unexplained quarrel having occurred in your house, between myself and another person; and therefore, to guard against the worst, I wrote down my wishes to two gentlemen who, I knew, would attend to them, and would take care that you were shielded through life from everything like danger and difficulty."

"Oh, I know you are noble and good," she cried; "I know it, I know it well:" and putting her hand over her eyes, she burst into tears.

Morley soothed her, and feeling that it would be best to change the subject as soon as possible, he said, "Where is your brother? I was in hopes that by coming so early, I might find him here."

Helen shook her head. "He has not been home all night," she replied; "indeed, he very seldom is. Sometimes I do not see him for a week."

Morley mused. "I came to tell you," he said at length, "that as far as this business of the forgery is concerned, I think you may consider him safe. I have seen the gentleman, Colonel Lieberg, whose name was used, and he has promised me not to proceed against your brother at all."

"Oh, that is joyful indeed!" exclaimed Helen; "then all danger is past, and I need not become a burden to Lady Malcolm, and Miss Carr."

This was certainly quite the contrary effect to that which Morley wished to produce, and he went on to explain to his fair companion, that all Lieberg and himself could do might perhaps be ineffectual. He assured her, at the same time, that he looked upon it as more necessary than ever she should be removed from the neighbourhood and influence of her brother, and from the house in which she then dwelt, till such time as an appointment in one of the Colonies could be procured for William Barham, or some means could be taken to get him out of England, and separate him from his evil companions.

Morley urged it upon her in various ways and with so many arguments, that she replied at length with a smile, though it was a sad one, "Are you not sure that I will do anything you tell me? I should either be very obstinate or very base, if, after all your generous kindness, I did not follow your advice precisely. Lady Malcolm is to call for me at one o'clock to-day, and I am quite ready to go. The only thing that embarrasses me is, that I do not well know what to do with this house, which my father had taken for a year. There are two or three months still to run, and I do not like to deprive William of a home when he chooses to have one. Yet Lady Malcolm says, I must bring the maid with me, otherwise he will find out from her where I am."

Morley undertook to arrange the whole of that business for her, to see the landlord of the house, and to have some person put in to take care of it, as soon as she was gone. He then rose to depart, though the chief object of his coming had not been spoken of as yet; but when he took her hand to wish her good-bye, he said, "There is one thing that I must ask you to promise me, and to keep your promise most strictly, without asking me why."

"You have but to name it," said Helen, looking up in his face timidly.

"It is simply this," replied Morley; "and it will not be very difficult to keep, I trust. Give me your word that, under no circumstances whatsoever, you will mention where you are going to before you leave this house for Lady Malcolm's, or even that you are going away at all, till you are actually gone. I say, to no one, meaning, not only to your own brother, but speaking generally, to no one—not even to my dearest friend."

He laid so strong an emphasis upon the last words as to make Helen Barham give a little start, and gaze inquiringly in his face. But she replied, the next instant—

"I will mention it to no one upon earth. I see that you have some strong reason for what you say, but I am quite contented to be ignorant of it, till you think fit to tell me—though, perhaps, I may not see you again for a long while."

Morley understood that she did not venture to ask the question "When?" and he replied, "I shall meet you this very night, I trust, for Lady Malcolm has asked me to spend the evening there. Believe me, dear Miss Barham, it will be the greatest satisfaction to me that I have ever known, to see you there; for, under the protection of that excellent lady, and with the acquaintance and friendship of Miss Carr, you may set the frowns of fortune at defiance; and I trust that such sorrow—I may say, such agony of mind, as you must have been suffering when I saw you a few days ago, may have passed away for ever."

He let go her hand as he spoke, and turned towards the door, while Helen Barham, with her eyes gazing upon the ground, stood murmuring to herself—"And in those few days you have done all this!"

When he was gone, she pressed her hand tightly upon her brow for several minutes, and then saying—"I must not think of it, I will not think of it;

it is foolish—it is mad—it is wrong!" she proceeded hastily to occupy herself with other things; putting by all the objects that she did not intend to take with her; locking up this drawer and that; sometimes sitting down for a moment, and sketching with her pencil some wild, fanciful head, upon a sheet of paper which lay on the table, and then starting up again, to employ herself more actively—struggling vehemently, in short, against feelings and thoughts that called loudly for attention, in every pause of occupation. She had been thus engaged for about an hour, and the clock stood at a quarter to twelve, when there came the roll of wheels, and a loud knock at the door.

"There he is again!" exclaimed Helen, thinking it was the knock of Morley's groom; "there he is again! How kind of him to come back!"

The maid, however, was the first person who appeared, bearing a card in her hand, upon which was written—"Lieutenant-Colonel, Count Lieberg." The girl gave the ticket to her mistress, and informed her that the gentleman whose name it bore was below, and begged the honour of a few minutes' conversation with her.

"Oh, let him come up!" exclaimed Helen, gladly, recollecting that the name was that of Morley's friend, who had so generously agreed to spare her brother—"show him up directly;" and she waited with eager expectation, well pleased to have an opportunity of thanking him for his promised forbearance.

I have before described Lieberg, but still I must pause for a moment to notice the effect his appearance produced on the mind of Helen Barham. He came up the stairs with a quick and easy step, his whole dress being in the height, but not the excess, of fashion, his hat, shining like glass, held in his hand, his glossy black hair waving lightly over his high clear forehead, his fine eyes sparkling with that peculiar fire and lustre which rendered them so different from the eyes of any other being, and his lips bearing a mild and pleasant smile, while his whole air and look was that of a high-finished and graceful gentleman. There was not a feature, there was not a line, there was not a movement, that Helen Barham could find fault with; and yet, strange to say, when she beheld him, though prepared to be pleased, and ready to admire; though full of gratitude, and with a heart tenderly alive to kindness, an unaccountable shudder came over her the moment that her eyes rested upon him.

Is it that some faculty altogether independent of and finer than reason itself, gives us instant intimation of the presence of a being who purposes, or is destined to work us some grievous harm? Who is there that has not felt antipathies, for which he could find no motive, and against which he strove in vain, till at length something has discovered that the being thus strangely disliked was exercising some dark influence upon our fate and happiness? Helen Barham did not strive to reason with her feelings; she resisted and overcame the impression, as far, at least, as her outward demeanour was concerned; and advancing, with the grace which she always displayed, she held out her hand at once to Count Lieberg, saying—"Sir Morley Ernstein, sir, has told me how nobly and kindly you are disposed to behave towards my brother. I need not assure you that I am full of deep gratitude; and most sincerely do I pray God to reward you as you deserve."

A strange dark shade came over Lieberg's countenance, but he replied at once, pressing Helen's hand gently, but not a moment too long—"Morley has been beforehand with me, then? I thought I should have been early enough to convey you intelligence which I was sure would please you, myself. However, I must not be angry with him; for the satisfaction of giving you happiness and relief might well lead him to steal a march upon his friend. I have a little, however, still to tell you myself, which he cannot know of, as I have only heard the intelligence this morning. I think, beyond all doubt, that I shall be able to obtain possession of the draft without suffering it to fall into the hands of any of the myrmidons of justice. In that case, all danger will be at an end."

"But if not," said Helen, with her heart sinking at the idea of there still being so much peril—"but if not, will his fate then be sealed?"

Lieberg seemed to hesitate, and taking a seat near her, he looked down upon the floor for a moment or two, apparently in deep thought, and then replied—"It might be difficult to save him, if we cannot get hold of the draft ourselves, and destroy it. One would need to bribe the officers with some enormous sum; or else I should have to refuse to give evidence, which might place me in a dangerous position myself. But I trust that this will not be; I trust that, ere two days more are over, I shall have the document in my own hands. So let us not think of such unpleasant circumstances. You must have had, I fear, a sad time of it lately, my poor young lady. Morley's account of you and your fate has been enough to melt a heart of stone, and, I can assure you, it interested me not a little; so that I trust not only to be able to relieve your mind in regard to your brother, but to do something more for your happiness hereafter, if you will permit me."

"You are very kind, indeed," replied Helen; "but were this once off my mind, I think, with the friends who have unexpectedly risen up around me, I should have nothing to desire or wish for. My hours would have been sad, indeed," she added, "if it had not been for the comfort and consolation which have been given me by Sir Morley Ernstein."

Lieberg smiled. "He is, indeed, very amiable," he said: and Helen blushed, till her face and neck were all one crimson. The words that Lieberg spoke were nothing, but it was the tone and meaning smile that brought the bright blood up into her face. There was a slight touch of indignation, however, in her feelings; and though her face still glowed, she raised her head high, while she replied—"He is, indeed, very amiable, and not alone amiable, but generous; ay, and good, too. He is one of those who, I am sure, would never take an ungenerous advantage of any one, not even to obtain that which he most desired in life."

"You are quite right," said Lieberg, seeing that the well of Helen's feelings was all pure.

"Morley's impulses are all generous and noble; sometimes, perhaps, a little too generous for his own happiness, and for those he wishes well to. There are occasions, my dear young lady, when our own gratification is the means of gratifying another too, and in those instances self-denial is unkind."

Helen did not understand what he meant, for she was a high-hearted, tender being, but by no means metaphysical; and Lieberg, seeing more deeply into her character every moment, skilfully changed the conversation to less dangerous ground, and, in the open field, where she was less prepared to defend herself, he put forth all those fascinating powers which he possessed, and which were far greater than it would be easy to do justice to. Helen listened with pleasure, and with some surprise, and to a certain point Lieberg succeeded, for he excited a kind of admiration; but it was the admiration of the mind, the heart had nothing to do with it; and even had the little citadel of Helen's bosom not been fully garrisoned, as it was, Lieberg would have made no progress that day in attempting to storm it.

There seemed, however, to be a greater impression produced upon himself than perhaps he had anticipated. Often, in the midst of his brilliant conversation, he bent his eyes upon the ground for some moments, and then raised them thoughtfully to Helen's face, gazing upon her beauty, and seeming, as it were, to drink it in, but at the same time with a grave and meditative air, which took from it all offence.

With an art peculiar to himself, he brought up subject after subject the most unlikely to arise from the circumstances in which he and Helen Barham were placed, and he listened to all her replies with a look of interest, which was not without its flattery. He was surprised, it is true, to find her mind so richly stored. He was pleased and struck with much that she said, and his whole manner, as well as his words, showed that it was so, while, at the same time, he never gave up—though he never presumed upon it—that position of mental superiority which he was so well calculated to maintain against almost all men, and which, when not painfully felt, has no slight effect upon the hearts of women. They do not always love those they most approve, but in general they love those whom they look up to, be it in right or wrong.

At length, however, as the hands of the clock approached the point of half-past twelve, and his fair companion became somewhat penurious of her replies, Lieberg, with quick perception, saw that his visit must come to an end, or be tedious to her, and he knew there is nothing so dangerous as to remain long enough to be wished away.

"She is either going out to meet Morley, or she expects him here," he thought, "and I had better take my leave at once. He will disappoint her ere many days be over, and then it may be my task to console. Her heart is not so far gone to him as I imagined.—I will now wish you good-bye, Miss Barham," he said, rising, "but I hope you will not exclude me for the future from society that, I assure you, I value highly. You love music, I see, and I am passionately fond of it. You like drawing too, if I may judge from that table. I am not without some slight knowledge of that art, and I possess some of the finest small pictures in Europe. I will not give up the hope of some day showing them to you. However, for the present we have other things to think of; the first of which, of course, is your brother. I doubt not, by this time to-morrow, I shall have good news to bear to you; I suppose this is as good a time to find you as I could choose?"

Helen was about to reply at once, that she would not be there on the following day, and to inform him where he would find her; but the promise she had made to Morley suddenly rushed to her mind. Then again she thought, "But surely I may tell him! He has my brother's life in his hands, and could never be meant——. But, no," she said to herself again, "I have promised, and he shall never say that I swerved from any promise to him, even in the least degree."

The consideration of all this, and of what she should reply, together with the consciousness that she was long ere she did answer, called the colour into her cheek again, as she said, with an evasion that she did not like to use,

"I am very seldom, if ever, out."

Lieberg saw that she was more moved than was natural, by the simple question that he had asked; but he himself was too much impressed by her beauty and grace to judge with his usual acuteness of what was passing in her mind. When he got into his cabriolet, his thoughts were full of Helen Barham.

"Beautiful, indeed!" he muttered—"Beautiful, indeed! This boy is a fool, with his advantages!" and driving on, busy with reveries of his own, he well nigh killed two people at the corner of Oxford Street, and grazed one of the posts with the wheel of his vehicle.

CHAPTER XIX.

A PORTRAIT TAKEN.

THE underworkings of the passions in the human heart, the movements and the progress of that central fire in the world of each man's breast—that fire which is never guessed at by the surface, except from some slight and often unobserved indications, or from some violent outburst, like the eruption of a volcano—the underworkings of the passions, I say, are generally far more worthy of the investigation of philosophy, if we would take the trouble, are far more replete with the tragic and the sublime, than all the external demonstrations to which we give so much attention. When sitting in the midst of a social circle, and often when gay looks and light jests abound, who is there shall say, what are the feelings really within the very bosoms that are next to us—what the passions that are gnawing the core of the hearts that seem all merriment?—the cankerworm of envy—the sharp tooth of hatred—the bitter grinding jaws of disappointment—the locusts of ill-requited love

eating up all the green things of hope? Alas! too often in the world in which we live, if we could draw back the veil from the hearts of the most cheerful scene, there would be much weeping amongst us for the sorrows of others, or our own!

The drawing-room of Lady Malcolm was a pleasant and a cheerful room; and—though in the midst of London—she had contrived, by manifold flowers and shrubs, frequently renewed, to give it a certain degree of freshness, an air and a scent of the country, which were wonderfully refreshing to the London-tired senses at the end of a long season. In that drawing-room, with the windows open and the warm air of a summer's night stealing through the half-closed blinds, sat the good lady herself, together with Juliet Carr and Helen Barham, waiting for the arrival of Morley Ernstein. He was the only person invited, for Lady Malcolm not only wished Helen Barham to remain as quietly as might be in her house, but she also wished Morley and Juliet Carr to have as much of each other's society, uninterrupted, as possible.

As far as all the external circumstances of life could go, nothing could be happier for Helen Barham than the change which had occurred, and the situation in which she was now placed. Good Lady Malcolm was feeling and acting towards her as a mother. That worthy lady, after embracing Morley's proposal, as eagerly as we have seen her do, had for a little time been puzzled by the question of how she was to treat the person whom she had promised to protect, but she had wisely put off the consideration of it till she had seen Miss Barham with her own eyes. When she did see her, however, all doubt upon the matter vanished; the engaging charm which pervaded Helen's whole demeanour, whether in sorrow or joy, gloom or gaiety, affected instantly so very impressible a person as Lady Malcolm; and she had come away, declaring to Juliet as soon as she got into the street, that Helen was the sweetest creature she had ever seen in her life, and that she should not wonder, if properly brought out, and introduced into good society, were she to end by marrying a Duke. She consequently at once set Helen on a par with herself and Juliet, and treated her as her own child from the moment she entered her house, doing everything that motherly tenderness could do to remove any little sensation of shyness and dependence, and to make her perfectly at home and at ease in her new abode.

Juliet, though perhaps not quite so easily charmed as Lady Malcolm, had not only felt the fascination of Helen Barham's demeanour very strongly, but had been more deeply interested in her than Lady Malcolm herself, entering into all her sensations—perhaps almost divining her thoughts. On their very first interview she had watched her beauty with a curious and attentive eye, even while occupied in recalling her to herself after she had fainted; and when Helen recovered, Juliet remained meditative, if not sad, for some time. There is nothing like woman's heart for finding out woman's secrets, and Juliet—perhaps by questioning herself as to what would have been her own feelings had she been so situated with Morley Ernstein—in a great degree discovered those of Helen Barham.

When the conviction of what the poor girl's sentiments towards her deliverer must be, flashed upon Juliet's mind, her sensations were strange, and for a moment beyond all control. The first question she asked herself was, "Does Morley love her after all?—Can he help loving her—so beautiful, so interesting, so much to be pitied?" But the next moment she recollected all she knew of his character, every trait that she had remarked of his demeanour in regard to the very matter with which her thoughts were busied; and, though she had at first clasped her hand upon her heart to stop its insufferable beating, she now took it away relieved, saying in her own mind—"'Tis I whom he loves. Alas, poor Helen Barham!"

For an instant, for a single instant, Juliet Carr had felt the pangs of jealousy, but the moment after, when her feeling of security in Morley's love returned, she reproached herself bitterly for the joy she felt at that which must needs produce another's sorrow. The few hours' calm reflection which intervened between their visit to the fair object of their care, and her arrival at Lady Malcolm's house, calmed down and quieted Juliet's feelings, and enabled her to play her part towards Helen, when she did arrive, in the manner which might be expected from her character. As a sort of atonement for loving Morley Ernstein, and being loved by him, as well as from tenderness and interest, and kindness towards Helen, no sister could have shown her more affectionate care and attention than were displayed by Juliet Carr. She sat with her in the room which had been assigned to her near her own; she aided her to arrange it with taste; she saw if anything was wanting, and had it instantly supplied; she talked with her of future prospects and bright hopes, and lavished on her all those little acts of gentle attention, which removed every feeling of strangeness, and made Helen feel that she had a friend upon whose bosom she could cast herself in danger, or sorrow, or temptation if it should come, and tell her all without fear or hesitation.

That conviction was in itself a relief, a mighty relief to the poor girl's heart; and though her mind still wandered to Morley Ernstein, and thought dwelt, in spite of all her efforts, upon the connection between him and Juliet Carr, when she looked upon her lovely companion, marked her transcendent beauty, listened to her melodious voice, and experienced such tenderness and generous kindness, she could not refrain, even in Juliet's presence, from looking down with a sigh, and murmuring indistinctly with a melancholy movement of the head, "no wonder that he loves her."

The day passed over in this manner, but before night, Helen Barham was quite familiar with the house and its inhabitants. Everything that Lady Malcolm saw of her, led that lady to approve her conduct more and more. Her manners were so graceful, her whole demeanour so distinguished, that the good lady began to feel proud of her protégée, and looking from Helen to Juliet, as she sat at dinner, she could

not help thinking, that seldom on the face of this earth, had two such beautiful beings sat side by side.

Helen was sad and thoughtful during the early part of the evening, but in consideration of those with whom she dwelt, she struggled against the gloom that oppressed her; sought her usual occupations, and followed her ordinary pursuits. Thus while Lady Malcolm herself fell quietly asleep over a purse that she was netting, and Juliet busied her fingers with embroidery, Helen went on sketching with a masterly hand, though with the carelessness of absent thoughts, a scene from Milton's Paradise Lost, representing the contention of the archangel and the fiend.

Juliet talked to her from time to time, and then came round to view her work. "Why, Helen!" she exclaimed, with the first impulse of surprise, as she looked over her shoulder; "you have drawn a friend of ours for the angel!"

Helen looked up in her face with her large lustrous eyes, but made no reply, and Juliet returned thoughtfully to her seat again. Helen added several more strokes to the other figure, and then pushed it gently across the table to her fair companion, saying, with a sad smile—

"You shall have it, for you are an angel too, I think. It is like him, I believe—though I did not intend it."

Juliet gazed for several minutes intently at the drawing, which was beautifully, though slightly executed, and while she was still thus employed, Sir Morley Ernstein was announced and entered the room.

Lady Malcolm started up out of her sleep; and not a little emotion was felt both by Helen Barham and Juliet Carr. Strange to say, however, Juliet showed it most. She, who had usually so much command over herself, was now fluttered and agitated. It is true there were sensations in her bosom towards Morley Ernstein, which produced a thrill whenever she saw him; but in the most profound lakes the gushing of the fountains is hidden by the depth of the waters; and those feelings confined themselves to her heart, and did not at all appear on the surface. In the present instance it was the presence of Helen Barham that agitated her more than the coming of Morley Ernstein. She sympathized with the poor girl deeply, and by a power, which true benevolence really has, she placed herself in the situation of her fair companion so completely, as to feel all that she felt without losing the emotions natural to her own situation also. There was always a great abnegation of self in the character of Juliet Carr, and though she could not have sacrificed Morley's love for any consideration, yet she did wish that he would now speak to Helen first.

But Morley did not do so, and would not have done so for the world, even on Helen's own account. There had been something in her manner that morning which he would not suffer his mind to rest upon, the remembrance of which he had cast from him as an idle vanity, but which, nevertheless, influenced his conduct, making him feel that it would be better to mark at once his attachment to Juliet Carr as strongly as possible. After speaking for a moment, then, with Lady Malcolm, he turned to Juliet, and took her hand in his, with his face beaming with all the affection that was in his heart. He called her by her Christian name, too, as she had permitted him, and every look and every tone was calculated to leave no doubt on the mind of any one, as to what were his feelings towards her.

Juliet was only the more agitated; but Helen was less so than might have been expected. The marked conduct of Morley towards Juliet Carr did her good. She had previously made up her mind, and read her fate, and the only thing that could have shaken her greatly at that moment, would have been the renewal of doubt and hope. Thus, when Morley turned towards her, and spoke to her, as he had been accustomed to do, kindly, gently, tenderly—ay, tenderly!—for a slight inclination, which he detected in his own breast, to make his manner towards Helen a little less warm than it had been when they were alone together, caused him resolutely to resist such a feeling as dishonourable to her, to Juliet, and to himself—when he spoke to her, then, kindly, gently, and tenderly—as if, in short, he were a brother—she received him, not without emotion, indeed, but with a much greater appearance of calmness than she had previously hoped to obtain.

Morley congratulated her upon her change of abode, and upon the friendship of Lady Malcolm; for it was a part of his plan, and, indeed, was only consistent with his impetuous character, to go straightforward to every difficult or unpleasant point, and never to be satisfied till all was said that it might be necessary to say. Many people do great things by avoiding difficulties, but bolder minds love the task of overcoming them. He then added, in a rather lower voice—

"I have seen your brother, my dear Miss Barham, and we are to meet again to-morrow; when I hope all things will be settled to your satisfaction. In the mean time, I need not ask if you are comfortable and happy with these friends, for I know Lady Malcolm is all kindness, especially where she meets with undeserved sorrow. I think, too," he added, turning his eyes to Juliet, "that we might very well trust the happiness of any one to Miss Carr's tenderness."

"We have done what we could to soothe her, Morley," replied Juliet Carr, "but it is not to be expected that Miss Barham should yet be quite as cheerful as we will hope to see her. She can amuse herself, however, even now, and at the same time gratify her friends.—Look here!"

"Oh, no, no!" exclaimed Helen, trying to prevent Juliet from showing the drawing; but ere she could stop her, it was in Morley's hand—

"Good Heavens!" he exclaimed, as soon as he had cast his eyes upon it, "why this is Lieberg!"

"Oh, no, no!" exclaimed Helen again, "I did not mean it for anybody. Indeed, I never thought of what I was drawing!"

"But this cannot have been by accident, surely," said Morley; "the likeness is so striking. Did you ever see Count Lieberg, Miss Barham?"

"I saw him this morning," replied Helen, at

once. "He called upon me—not long before Lady Malcolm came—to tell me what you had told me before regarding my brother."

"And did he do anything to offend you?" asked Morley, looking at the drawing with a smile, as he marked the character in which she had depicted Lieberg.

"Oh, no!" replied Helen, "nothing; on the contrary, he was as kind as he could be; but I can assure you I meant nothing by that drawing, and had not an idea that I was sketching any one, till Miss Carr remarked one likeness; and now you have remarked another. If there be any, it is purely accidental, though, perhaps, without thinking of it, one naturally takes the features which one has lately seen, as I have remarked after reading a book, the thoughts come back to us as if they were our own. Will you give it to me," and taking it out of Morley's hand, she added, speaking to Juliet—"You must let me tear it, and I will draw you another.—You shall have the angel as before," she said, with a sad smile, and an earnest look into Juliet's eyes, "but I must change the face of the fiend; as it seems that I most unintentionally took that of one who has shown himself anything but unkind to me and mine."

"Tear it—tear it, Helen!" said Juliet; "I am sure you did not mean to give the portrait of any one in such a character."

"On my word I did not," replied Helen, and then, after putting her hand to her brow for an instant, she added—"Come, dear Miss Carr, to make up for destroying the drawing I gave you, if Sir Morley Ernstein will sit down on the sofa and talk to you, I will take his portrait. I am sure you will be glad to have it, for you said you had known him long. I can sketch very quickly, and I once thought of trying to make my bread by portrait-painting. But I took fright at the thought of all the people that might come to me, and gave up the idea."

Juliet Carr blushed at the proposal, partly with feelings of pleasure, but partly abashed; for the remembrance that Morley had not yet said one word which could justify her, or any one, in looking upon his attachment to her as certain, was still present to her mind. She answered not, then, but Lady Malcolm replied for her, eagerly—

"Do—pray do, my dear child—and then you shall copy it for me."

At the same time Morley took his seat upon the sofa by the side of Juliet Carr; Lady Malcolm rang for tea; and Helen, while she pursued her work, joined in the conversation, not only frequently, but gaily, as if the object on which she was employed had given her back her cheerfulness. Once, when Juliet was about to rise, she exclaimed, quickly—

"Sit still—pray sit still—he will not remain in the same attitude if you move!" and, about ten minutes after, she beckoned to Lady Malcolm, asking her, "Will that do?"

"Oh, beautiful, beautiful!" exclaimed Lady Malcolm—"that is quite perfect!"

"Not yet," said Helen, and she added some touches more.

Juliet became impatient to see the sketch likewise, and, starting up playfully, she said—"I will be excluded no longer, Helen."

When she came round, however, her cheek took the colour of a rose. It was not alone Morley's portrait, but her own likewise, that Helen Barham had drawn; and, with a skill that nothing but intense feeling could have taught her, she had cast into the looks of both, as they seemed gazing upon each other, that expression of deep affection which she was but too sure was in their hearts.

Morley followed Juliet to Helen's side, almost at once, and gazing upon the picture, he first smiled with pleasure; but, the next instant, a thoughtful expression came over his countenance, and he looked down upon the beautiful head of Helen Barham—as she bent over it, resting her cheek upon her hand—with sensations that it would be difficult to describe. He asked himself hurriedly, what had been really her feelings? and then he would not suffer his heart to answer the question. He voluntarily suffered his ideas to remain confused; but in their vagueness was mingled not only much apprehension, lest there should be those things in the bosom of Helen which might affect her after-peace, but pity for her in every way, and a certain portion, if not of unmerited self-reproach, at least of regret, that it had not been possible for him to protect and support her from the beginning, through the medium of others.

Helen, however, seemed pleased with her work, she forced herself to be cheerful, and the evening passed over apparently brightly for all. The conversation, which had been diverted, for the time, from the subject of Count Lieberg's visit, returned to it ere long, and Helen recapitulated, in her own artless manner, all that had passed. As length she came to speak of his question in regard to calling upon her the following day, and she added—

"I was quite sure that I might tell him I was coming hither——"

Morley started, with a feeling of apprehension, but Helen instantly added—"However, as you had told me I was not to mention the fact to any one, I refrained, and merely said that I was seldom out, knowing that you could inform him of what you thought fit, afterwards."

"You did quite right, dear Miss Barham," replied Morley—"you did perfectly right. I entreated you to tell no one, and if I had wished any exception made, I would have said so."

Both Helen and Juliet gazed at Morley with some surprise; but Lady Malcolm instantly read a comment upon her young friend's reply, saying—"He is too gay a personage, Helen—this Count Lieberg—to be a very safe intimate for you. Not that I mean, my dear child, he would or could do you any harm; nor do I know, indeed, of any harm that he ever did do; but some men establish for themselves, by tolerating all vices, and associating intimately with persons of dissolute habits, the reputation of licentiousness, even when they do not deserve it. Now, I never in all my life heard the least harm of this Count Lieberg. I never saw his name in the papers, or anything of that kind; but, at the same time, he is a great deal with

people who are notorious for dissipated habits, and consequently he is looked upon as one of the same class, though, perhaps, the best of the class. Nevertheless, Morley was quite right, Helen; there is no need at all of his knowing where you are, and, to say the truth, I think it better he should not."

Morley said nothing, but he was not a little obliged to Lady Malcolm for saving him the pain of an explanation; and, shortly after, he took his leave, promising to return the following day, and let Helen know what was the result of his second conference with her brother.

As soon as he was gone, Helen rose to retire to her room. A slight degree of paleness had come over her face, a look of exhaustion, which Juliet remarked, and very well understood. She came round, then, to where Helen stood, and putting her arm gently round her, she kissed her cheek, saying, in a low voice—"I think, Helen, you are more of an angel than any of us."

Helen pressed her hand gently in hers; and though not a word more was spoken on either part, each felt that they understood the other; and Helen Barham, with swimming eyes, retired to her chamber, and wept with very mingled feelings.

CHAPTER XX.

A BETROTHAL.

THE interview between Morley Ernstein and William Barham was to take place at the hotel in Berkeley-square; and Morley had written to Lieberg, giving him notice that the young man would be there, and begging him, if possible, to meet him, as the draft was to be presented on the ensuing day, so that no time ought to be lost. Lieberg breakfasted an hour earlier than usual, but it was not with the object of being in time for the proposed meeting, as mid-day was the hour appointed, and as soon as he had done breakfast, he got into his cabriolet to drive to the house of Helen Barham.

When he reached the house, he got out and knocked himself, and his keen and marking eye at once perceived that it was not Helen's neat-looking maid who opened the door, but, on the contrary, a person bearing the look, which is very peculiar, of people that are put in to keep houses, which would otherwise be vacant.

In reply to his demand for Miss Barham, the woman said, in a short, quick tone—"She's not here, sir—she's gone."

"Pray, where is she gone to?" demanded Lieberg, in a quiet tone, as if the tidings did not surprise him in the least.

"I can't tell, sir," answered the woman. "Two ladies called for her, and took her away with them, but I don't know where, nor who they were."

"Ladies!" said Lieberg, with some emphasis; but the other replied immediately, with a toss of her head—"Yes, ladies, every inch of them; that I'll answer for; and so is she, too, poor thing, though she is not so rich as some; but as for their being ladies, the servant called his mistress 'My Lady' twice—that's all I know."

"And pray who put you in here, to take care of the house?" said Lieberg.

"Why, the landlord, to be sure," replied the woman; "and he bade me, too, take great care of all Miss Barham's things, and to dust all that's in the drawing-room every day."

"So, then," said Lieberg, "Miss Barham has left some things behind her?"

"Oh, yes, a great many," replied the woman, who seemed not to be in the most respondent humour in the world; "but really, sir, I cannot stay answering questions all day. I have told you everything I know about the young lady, and that is little enough."

"It is so," replied Lieberg; and getting into his vehicle, without further comment, he drove away.

As he was still a full hour and a half before his time, he sought for occupation, and to all appearance gave not a second thought to Helen Barham's place of residence. It was not so, however, in reality; and as he drove away, he repeated twice—"This is Ernstein's doing!" But he had now regained all that self-possession which Helen's beauty had for a time disturbed; and when—after attending a sale of pictures and bronzes, at Phillipps's Rooms, for about an hour—he proceeded to visit Morley Ernstein, his look was as calm and cheerful, his manner as unembarrassed and graceful, as ever. Not one word passed his lips in regard to his visit of that morning to the house of Helen Barham, though there was some meaning in the smile with which he shook hands with Morley on their meeting. To the call he had made on the preceding day, however, he referred at once, saying—"Well, Morley, I have seen this fair object of your benevolence, and must confess that her beauty, her grace, and her talent too, far exceed what I had expected. I cannot help thinking you a great fool, begging your pardon for so saying; but I suppose we shall never think alike upon these matters, and I shall give up attempting to convert you to my doctrines, for every man must seek happiness in his own way; and I do not see why a man's prejudices should not be considered as a part of his property which it is felony to rob him of, as well as anything else."

"Why, Lieberg," replied Morley, "prejudices, I should think, would be a sort of property of which, like paving-stones in a man's pocket, it would be kind to free him as soon as possible. But I rather think the dispute between you and me would be, as to which of my views are prejudices—which are principles. I do not mean to claim any outrageous morality, but in what I am doing now, I am quite sure I am right."

"I hope you are equally sure that you will be successful," replied Lieberg; "for my part, I think I shall soon leave the matter in your hands altogether, for I have some intention, ere the earth, and all it bears about with it, be a month older, of setting out for the Continent, and taking, what the people who travel and write books call 'an autumn tour,' somewhere."

"Why, I thought," said Morley, "that you were going down to the house of Lord Medway for the season?"

"He invited me," answered Lieberg; "but I

am not in a humour this year, either for stalking after partridges through a turnip-field, or for the beastly butchery of a battue. The last time I was at one, I felt myself like the dog that the man showed about London some time ago—'Billy,' you know, that killed a hundred rats in a minute—and I determined never to go to such barn-door slaughter again. But here comes this good youth, I suppose," he added, seeing the door open; "do not tell him at first. We may see some of the workings of the passions, which is better sport than a battue."

Morley thought that it was as cruel sport, too; but the waiter announcing that a gentleman desired to speak with him, he directed him to be shown in, and the moment after William Barham, with his pale, dissolute countenance, and his long light hair straggling as usual over his face, entered the room, but stopped suddenly short, on beholding Lieberg.

"Good morning, Mr. Barham," said Morley; "this gentleman is a friend of mine, who has promised me to do what he can to assist you. Take a seat, and let us talk over this affair."

William Barham glanced first at Morley, and then at Lieberg, and then at the door, as if he would fain have made his escape; but finding that impossible, he sat down, and looked doggedly at the table. Morley turned to Lieberg, as if to ask him to begin the discussion; but certainly Lieberg did it in a way that Morley the least expected and approved.

"I find, Mr. Barham," he said, fixing his dark, piercing, intelligent eyes upon him, with a gaze that seemed to look into his very heart—"I find that you have committed a forgery, and are likely to be hanged."

William Barham started up from his seat, and stared at Lieberg and Morley with eyes full of the wild, wandering expression of terror.

"I have it from the best authority," said Lieberg, still bending upon him the same eagle glance. "Cousins, the Bow-street officer, who is watching for you, told me the whole story."

The lad sank down in the chair again, clasped his hands over his eyes, and sobbed aloud. Still Lieberg held him under his dark, firm gaze, and Morley, puzzled and surprised, did not know well whether to interfere, and endeavour to assuage the unnecessary suffering which his companion was inflicting upon the unhappy young man, or not. A pause of more than a minute ensued, and even a small pause, under such circumstances, is long. Perhaps Lieberg himself was in doubt how he should proceed.

"Is it not so?" he said, at length; and then, as the boy sat silent, he turned his eyes towards Morley Ernstein with a strange expression, which Morley did not well understand. There was a degree of unsated fierceness in it, and yet it seemed to ask—"Shall I rack him further?—Will you abhor me, and interpose, if I do?"

Morley made a gesture, as if supplicating him to forbear, and in an instant the whole expression of Lieberg's countenance changed.

"Hark, young man!" he continued, speaking to young Barham, in a milder tone—"Do you know who I am!"

"No, sir," replied the unhappy youth; "I never saw you before, that I know of."

"And yet you have used my name for five hundred pounds!" said Lieberg.

The lad instantly sprang off his seat, and cast himself upon his knees at Lieberg's feet, exclaiming—"Forgive me—oh, forgive me!"

"I will forgive you," replied Lieberg, "upon one condition, which is, that you at once quit this country, and go to one of the Colonies—whichever I and my friend, Sir Morley Ernstein, may determine. You shall be furnished with money for your passage."

"But how shall I live when I am there?" exclaimed the youth. "I can but do as I have done here, and get into trouble again."

"There is no fear of that," interposed Morley; "some place or some occupation shall be found for you, which will put you above want, and if you behave well, means will be taken to procure your advancement."

"Besides," said Lieberg, "your sister will in all probability be able to do something for you. At all events, I and my friend, Sir Morley Ernstein, pledge ourselves that you shall be taken care of, if you conduct yourself properly. I must have no hesitation—this is your only chance of escaping the gallows, so choose quickly."

"Oh, I have chosen—I have chosen!" cried the young man, at once. "It would, of course, be far better for me to go and take my chance there, than stay here, and be hanged to a certainty."

"That is according to taste," answered Lieberg, who could not refrain from one of his bitter jests, even at that terrible moment; "however, if such be your opinion, come to me to-morrow at this same hour, and I will show you the note you drew, paid by my banker."

"But," said the boy, gazing earnestly in his face, as if to discover what was passing in Lieberg's inmost thoughts, yet with a look of cunning fear also, both lest he should offend and lest he should be deceived: "but—but—suppose you should change your mind!"

"And hang you after all!" rejoined Lieberg, with a contemptuous sneer: "it would be a very pleasant trick, young gentleman, for any of your present friends—such as Neville and others. But be so good as to recollect, that I have nothing to gain by hanging you: were I a surgeon, there might be some object, for I dare say you would make a very good subject for the anatomist's knife; but I am not a surgeon. Moreover, remember that if I wanted to send you to the gallows, I should have nothing to do this moment but to put my hand on your collar, call in the waiter, and send for an officer."

He took a step forward as he spoke, and the boy, in an agony of terror, started back, and looked behind him, as if he expected to see the whole array of Bow-street at the other side of the room.

"Now mark me, my good youth," said Lieberg, "and answer me straightforwardly; will you, or will you not come, as I have directed you?"

"I will, upon my honour, sir," replied the boy.

"Your honour!" exclaimed Lieberg; "but I

have got a better hold upon you than your honour. Mark me, my good sir, if you do not come precisely to the minute, you will find yourself at the new drop before a month be over. The sessions are coming on, and we will make short work with you, for I will not be trifled with. Do not suppose, either, that you can escape, for you ought to know well enough, that every movement you make is known, and I could have taken you out of your bed last night, if I had thought right, for I knew quite well where you were."

"Where?" exclaimed the youth, with a shrewd look; "where?"

"Where you should not have been," replied Lieberg, sternly; "not many yards from —— street, in the Strand."

The colour that comes up from agitation, not from shame—for alas, he was past that point—rose in the boy's countenance, and he only replied, "I will come—indeed I will."

Morley Ernstein had perceived from the first that Lieberg wished to conduct the whole business with William Barham himself, and although he might feel a suspicion, of which he was at the same time ashamed, regarding his companion's motives; yet he felt not only that he had no right, but also that it would be imprudent to interfere in a matter which entirely depended upon Lieberg himself. He had therefore abstained, as far as possible, from saying anything, but he now added a caution, which was totally independent of his friend's proceedings.

"If you will take my advice," he said, speaking to William Barham, "you will, in the mean time, that is to say, before you go to Colonel Lieberg's, avoid all your recent companions; and going home at once, remain quietly, without setting your foot beyond the doors till to-morrow."

Remarking that the boy hesitated, and answered nothing, and knowing what a hold evil habits have upon the mind, Morley resolved to try what fear would do, and for that purpose to make use of the information he had gained from Higgins. "I advise you alone for your own good," he said, "and to prevent you from missing the only chance of safety. You know quite well, that there are a number of other people engaged in this affair. Now those scoundrels will be glad enough to keep you here, in order to get your neck into the noose, instead of their own."

"I will peach against them all, if they do!" replied the youth, vehemently.

"That will not save you," replied Morley; "you are a principal, they are only accessories."

"I will not go near any of them," exclaimed the boy suddenly.

"Well, then, keep your resolution," rejoined Morley, "and you will do well. I pledge myself for your safety, as well as Colonel Lieberg, if you go to him to-morrow; but if you fail, I tell you as he has done, I abandon you from that moment, and will take no farther interest in you. Do you know where he lives?"

The young man replied in the affirmative, and took up his hat as if to depart, but then looked hesitatingly, first at Morley, and then at Lieberg, and then at Morley again. At length, however, he said, addressing the latter—"But I wanted to speak with you, Sir Morley—can't I have a word with you for a minute?"

Morley caught the quick eye of Lieberg glancing from the boy's face to his, and he replied at once: "If what you want to say refers to this business, it must be said to Colonel Lieberg, not to me, for upon him alone does your fate depend—or, at least, it must be said in his presence."

"It is not about that at all," answered the youth; "it is something which nobody has anything to do with, but you and I."

"Let him speak with you—let him speak with you, Morley," said Lieberg; "I am going to make a call on the other side of the square, and will be back with you again in ten minutes."

Thus saying, he left the room, and the young man, after gazing in Morley's face for a few moments, demanded, abruptly—"Pray where is my sister, sir?"

"Your sister is quite safe," replied Morley, in a calm tone, "and under the protection of those who will take care that no harm happens to her."

"That is to say, under yours, I suppose," said William Barham, looking at him with a keen and eager glance; "but I'll tell you what, sir, if such is the case, I think I have a right to ask, that you should settle something upon her, that she may not come to poverty too."

Morley grew angry. "You young scoundrel!" he said, "I have a great inclination to take you up, and throw you out of that window into the square. You have a right to ask, indeed! You, who would have sold your sister to a low and vagabond swindler—you, now to talk of having any right to meddle in her affairs!"

"You are wrong, sir," said the young man, boldly, and with a more straightforward tone than Morley had seen him yet assume; "you are wrong, sir; I would not have sold my sister. I would not have taken a penny for myself. Now that the truth must come out, I will tell you how it was—a man will do many things to save his life—what is there that he won't do, indeed?"

"Nothing dishonourable, if he be not a coward," answered Morley.

"Coward, or no coward!" rejoined the young man—"coward, or no coward, no man likes the gallows, and it was to save myself from that, that I did what I did; besides, I saw that, some day or another, she would not have bread to eat. She has been forced to sell almost everything, even now. Neville offered to settle five hundred a-year upon her, if I would consent, and to hang me if I didn't. So I had no choice; but I would not have taken a farthing from him myself, for all the world."

"You are not quite so bad as I thought you," replied Morley; "but, nevertheless, you are an atrocious scoundrel, and not a bit better for being a coward too. In regard to your sister, however, if you have really any feeling for her—and I can hardly think that such is the case with one who would prey upon her in the way that you have done—make your mind easy; she is no farther under my protection, than that I will see she is not subjected either to insult or annoyance. She is with two ladies who have

taken an interest in her; one, a lady of high rank, and one, a young lady who is very dear to me. They will provide for and take care of her; but, as to your present demand, I should be wronging her and myself both, were I to do anything which, even in the eyes of the world, might cause it to be supposed there exists any other connection between myself and her, than interest in her fate, and sorrow for her misfortunes."

"I suppose—" said the young man; but Morley stopped him at once.

"There is nothing more, sir, to be said upon the subject," he exclaimed. "I am very likely to be made angry in this matter; and, therefore, the less you speak, or suppose, the better."

"I was only going to say," replied the young man, "that I suppose, of course, as you know where she is, you'll have no objection to my seeing her."

"I certainly do know where she is," answered Morley; "but you will easily understand that, as she removed from her own house for the purpose of keeping at a distance from the influence you had so misused, and from the insulting solicitations which you had permitted and encouraged, there is not the slightest chance of your being permitted to see her. It was from yourself and your acquaintances that she fled; and, therefore, you will know nothing farther about her than you do know now, till you embark on board a vessel for one of the Colonies. Your sister's address will then be furnished to you; you can write to her, if your wishes prompt you to do so, and she will answer you, informing you of her own situation, hopes, and prospects. This is all I have to say upon the subject, and you must expect nothing more."

The young man frowned upon him fiercely as he spoke; and after looking at him with a bitter and a disappointed glance, for a moment or two, he said—"God give you as hard measure!"

"I hope he may give me just the same," replied Morley; "for I can call him to witness that I am acting as I judge best for the happiness both of yourself and her."

"Ay," said the young man, thoughtfully, "I may, some time or another, have the means of paying you this;" and without more ado, he quitted the room.

"He is a determined young villain!" was Morley's comment, as Helen's brother left him. "How strange it is that we sometimes see the gifts, both of mind and person, so unequally apportioned in the same family! Beauty, and talent, and virtue in one member of it, and vice, stupidity, and deformity in another. Who, even in look, would take that youth for Helen's brother?"

He had not long to consider the matter farther, for Lieberg soon came back, full of schemes of pleasure and amusement. He had a thousand things for Morley to see; he had a thousand things for Morley to do; and it was with difficulty that his friend, upon the excuse of other business, freed himself from him for an hour or two, in order that he might, as he had promised, convey to Helen Barham tidings of what had passed in regard to her brother. Perhaps it might have been a truer way of putting the matter, if we had said: in order to avail himself of the excuse he had made for visiting Juliet Carr. He promised, however, to join Lieberg in the park within two hours, and, certainly, those two hours were amongst the sweetest that ever he knew in life. He found Juliet Carr sitting with Lady Malcolm; Helen was in her own room; and after the elder lady had remained some short time, she rose, discreetly saying that she would send Miss Barham to hear what tidings he had brought. Juliet begged Lady Malcolm to let her go; and, I believe, that if one could have seen into her bosom, her heart would have been found beating terribly as she made the proposal. Lady Malcolm, however, replied—"I am going up for another pair of gloves, Juliet, and therefore I will tell her as I go."

Juliet and Morley were left alone. Strange to say, however, they both remained silent for several minutes. There was much that Morley desired to say, but yet the thought that Helen might come down every moment made him pause and hesitate, and lose even the time that he had. Juliet, on her part, divined something of what was passing in his breast, and she was afraid of speaking first, for she knew, whatever topic she chose, her voice would tremble so as to show that her thoughts were busy with agitating subjects.

Morley, however, at length discovered that the pause must not last any longer; and, as it was quite out of the question at that moment to talk of any indifferent subject, he went round the table, seated himself on the sofa by the side of Juliet, took her right hand, which lay idle in her lap, and pressing his lips upon it, added the small word "Juliet."

Juliet answered nothing, but sat with her beautiful eyes bent down, the colour glowing in her cheeks, her lip quivering, her bosom panting. Morley was beloved, and he felt it. "Juliet," he repeated—"Juliet, dear girl, after what I see, need I ask you any questions?"

"Oh, no, no!" murmured Juliet, turning her head slowly round, still bent so that he could scarcely see her glowing face for the rich hair that clustered over it; and, leaning her forehead and her eyes upon his shoulder, she repeated—"oh, no, no!"

The doors of Lady Malcolm's house were such as doors should always be, and opened noiselessly. Juliet's face was hid upon Morley's shoulder—her hand was clasped in his—his eyes were bent in tenderness upon her—his arm was thrown around her—when the door opened without their seeing it—closed again softly the moment after; and they remained alone for near an hour.

Alas! poor Helen Barham!

CHAPTER XXI.

AN INFAMOUS BARGAIN.

WILLIAM BARHAM was punctual to his hour; but Lieberg made him wait for fully twenty minutes in an empty room, looking out into the dull back court of a London house, where there

was nothing to amuse his mind within the chamber or without: not a picture, not a print upon the walls: not the sight of a chimney, the smoke of which would have given occupation to the eye: not an odd-looking table, with carved legs: not anything, in short, on which the energies of the spirit could spend themselves. The very carpet was in long straight lines of monotonous colours, and the walls were painted of a blank greyish hue.

The mind, when surrounded by dulness from which it cannot escape, is like the scorpion when hemmed in by fire, and turns to sting itself. That room seemed the very abode of gloom and despondency. The windows were dusty, and admitted but little light; they were not as regularly opened as they ought to have been, and there was a closeness in the atmosphere, a smell of desolation, if we may so call it, which made one feel faint. The grate looked somewhat rusty from neglect, and there were no fire-irons.

William Barham first walked to a window, and looked out, but nothing met his eye, except the tall, unpleasant, dingy brick wall of an opposite house, without a single casement looking that way. He then turned, and gazed round the room. It was all cheerless and dull. His eye found nothing on which it could rest. It was empty and gloomy as a heart that has been bereaved of the object of its love. He tried the window again, and then let his eye run over the walls of the room; but all was dark and sad. There was not even a Greek border on the broad expanse of dull, grey painted stucco, with which the mind might form a labyrinth for thought to lose herself withal. He walked up and down for a moment or two, and then cast himself down upon a chair, and his fancy gave itself up to that which was most painful—his own fate and circumstances.

Did Lieberg do it on purpose? Who can say? There are few men who know human nature better than he did. There are few who could more correctly appreciate the effect of solitary thought, with gloomy adjuncts, upon a mind loaded with crime, and weakened by vice and intemperance. It seemed, certainly, that he calculated upon producing a particular effect upon the mind of the unhappy boy who was in his power.

William Barham's eye, in the mean time, strained upon the floor. It grew more and more anxious in expression, its gaze more and more intense. He looked as if horror-struck with some object on which his eyes fell upon the carpet—but the unhappy boy saw nothing before him but his own fate. Remorse, if not repentance, visited his heart! He thought of all that he had done, of all that he might have done; he saw that, by his own folly, and by his own crimes, at the best he had driven himself from his native land, and had, but for an accident, condemned himself to death, to an ignominious and terrible death. He had lost all the advantages of a fair education, an honourable teaching, and of a good example. He had voluntarily chosen evil when good was within his grasp, and now the consequences had fallen upon his head, without any place of shelter, any hope, any refuge, except in the mercy of a man who had shown him some harshness, and whose objects he was strongly inclined to doubt. He had come thither with a palpitating heart, and he remained in agitation and distress.

Minute after minute went by, and each one seemed an age, till at length he began to think—"Is this man deceiving me?—Perhaps he is playing me false!—Perhaps even now he has sent for the officers of justice to seize their prey!"

He started up and approached the door, intending to steal out if he found no one, and to say that he could not wait any longer, if he met with any of the servants in the passage. There was a footman within a few yards, however, and when he had repeated that which he had made up his mind to speak, the man answered, with the cold sauciness of a London lackey,—"My master said you were to wait for him, and so you must wait, if you please."

The man stood directly in the way, and William Barham re-entered the room, with a sinking heart. His thoughts, hurried and confused, first turned to flight, but flight, he soon saw, was impossible. The window was high—there was a fall of five-and-twenty feet, or more, into the area below. His next thought was, what else could give him safety? Where was there any other hope? "This man must want something," he thought. "He must have some object, some purpose, some end to answer!—What can it be?—I will do anything, everything, if he will but spare my life."

It was at that moment that Lieberg, as if he had calculated it by a watch, sent to call the unfortunate William Barham to his presence; and when the youth appeared, he questioned him sternly and steadily, as to the whole transaction of the forgery, writing down his replies. Had William Barham been an old and wily offender, he might have refused to plead in this illegitimate sort of court; but fear now superseded everything: even natural cunning gave way before it, and he told all, though he saw Lieberg taking notes of each word he spoke.

"Now," asked the interrogator, when he had finished, "will you sign that?" and he put the paper before him.

"But will you promise me safety?" said the boy, torn by terrors of several kinds, and gazing upon the countenance of Lieberg with eyes that seemed as if they would start from their sockets—"will you promise me safety?"

"Yes," answered Lieberg, "I will promise you—but on one condition, that you will help me with your whole heart and mind in something that I desire to accomplish."

"Oh, that I will!" exclaimed the youth, "in anything that you like."

"In *anything?*" said Lieberg, with emphasis, and at the same time holding up his finger, to mark more particularly, that he had some especial object.

The blood rose slightly in William Barham's cheek, but the game was for life and death, and he had made up his mind. "Yes," he replied, nodding his head significantly; "perhaps I

understand what you mean. But I say, I will help you in anything you like."

"That is right," answered Lieberg, "that is quite right; and if you do help me, instead of death, or exile, and poverty, and privation, and gnawing want, you shall have comfort, and respectability, and affluence, in your own land."

The youth's eyes sparkled, and Lieberg went on. "Attach yourself to my fortunes," he continued, "and you are safe. I tell you fairly, all I wish you to sign this paper for, is, that I may have such a hold upon you, that neither any of those rascally companions whom you have unfortunately met with, nor any of the whining Methodists and hypocrites who are scarcely better than the others, may ever persuade you to play me false in this matter. Mark me! It is not any knavery on your part that I fear, it is weakness; but I think you know me well enough, to be sure that I will hang you, as certain as I live, if you fail me——"

"But will you certainly spare me, if I do not?" cried the youth. "Will you write it down?"

Lieberg paused for a moment, in meditation, drawing in his eyelids, as if to shut out even the daylight from his busy brain, and he replied, at length—

"Very well, I will, marking the condition, that you pledge yourself to assist me in one particular object, with your whole power and might."

"Very well," said the youth, and Lieberg wrote down the stipulations.

The boy signed, what might be called, his confession, and Lieberg put his hand to the promise. After he had done so, however, he shook his head, gazing on the boy with a smile full of pity and contempt.

"I will keep that promise, my good youth, firmly," he said, "but at the same time I will tell you, it is of no earthly value; for I have nothing to do but to let this bill slip into the hands of the Bow-street officers, and you are arrested, tried, and executed in the shortest possible time. No promise of mine could save you. It is the state that prosecutes, the law that condemns. I have nothing to do with it but to swear that this name, purporting to be mine, is not my handwriting," and he took out of his pocket-book the identical bill which William Barham had forged, and laid his finger upon the fatal words, "Frederick Lieberg," at the bottom.

The unhappy youth gazed at it, with eyes of eager fire—and oh, what would he have given to snatch it from the hand of him that held it, and tear it into a thousand pieces that moment! The bright eyes of Lieberg seemed to read his very thoughts, and again the dark and bitter smile curled his lip, as he said—

"You cannot get it, my good youth. It will remain with me till there is a stronger bond between you and me, and what I desire is accomplished.—Where is your sister?"

"I do not know," replied the youth, boldly. "Do you not know?—I thought you did."

"No, indeed," replied Lieberg, "I am utterly ignorant. But we must both know ere long. This is the first business we have before us.—You tell me true, I see it—but how happens it that she was removed without your knowledge?"

"I was away for two days," replied the youth, "and when I came back she was gone. But he knows—that Sir Morley Ernstein! Cannot you get him to tell you?"

"I would not ask him for this right hand," replied Lieberg, "but we will soon find out without him."

"He refused to tell me," said the youth; "he would give me no tidings, indeed, but that she is safe and with two ladies, one of whom is a lady of rank."

"Ha!" exclaimed Lieberg. "A lady of rank? Who can that be? And he positively refused to let you know where she is?"

"That he did," answered the youth; "but I'll tell you what he told me, too; he said that I should know where she is, and she should write to me, as soon as I was aboard ship to go to the Colonies. Can't we make something of that, sir?"

"Certainly," answered Lieberg, "we will make everything of that, if we cannot do what we desire before; for that might produce a long delay, which must be avoided if possible.—Oh, we will arrive at it!" he said, after a moment's thought—"where did you sleep, last night?"

"In our own house," replied the boy. "The rent is paid, the woman told me, and she is put in to keep it, with seven shillings a week; but the place is still ours, till the twenty-ninth of September."

"Well then," said Lieberg, "go back at once to the good woman who is in the house, and in the course of the evening get her to tell you exactly what was the appearance of the ladies who came for your sister, and what was the livery of the servant whom she talked of to me. Whether he was a tall man or a short man, and, in a word, all the particulars that she can furnish you with. Do not let her see that you are cross-questioning her, for I suspect, from her manner to me yesterday morning, she has been told not to tell the truth to any one. You must therefore proceed cautiously."

"Oh, I understand—I understand!" replied the boy. "I must fish it out, you mean."

"Exactly," said Lieberg, with a smile at the expression. "Fish it out, and come to me at six o'clock to-day. I shall then be dressing for dinner, but you will be admitted; and now, as perhaps you are in want of money, there is a ten-pound note for you. If we proceed successfully, your fortunes are begun."

The youth took the money eagerly. It was certainly the wages of iniquity, but evil—whatever be its kind—always smoothes the road for more; and William Barham had so often tasted burning pleasures bought by money wrongly acquired, that there were no great scruples left in his mind. His sister's honour and soul, her happiness, and her peace of mind, he was very ready to sell for the combined temptation of safety and enjoyment; and, taking the money greedily, he gave Lieberg a meaning smile, which even sickened the superior demon with whom he was dealing; for surely it is a part of the punish-

ment which evil spirits are destined to feel, even in the joys which they propose to themselves, that they must abhor the tools they work with, and loathe the means which they employ for their own ends. If Lieberg, at that moment, had given way to his own inclination, he would have driven the youth, with contempt and hatred, into the street. But he suffered him to depart quietly, saying—"Do not fail;" and William Barham proceeded on his way.

Exactly at the hour appointed he was at Lieberg's door again, and was instantly admitted to his dressing-room. The splendour and the luxury of everything that he beheld, the beautiful arrangement, the exquisite taste, struck him so much, that for a moment he did not speak, gazing round at all the richly-chased silver implements, the china, the glass, and the steel-work, with which the dressing-table was covered, and thinking that his sister would be a very happy girl, if, on any terms, she was permitted to live in the midst of such magnificence as that. And yet William Barham had been taught good principles; had heard, during his early youth, moral and religious doctrines from the lips of his mother; and, until his father's health had failed entirely, had daily received instruction from him. But there are some minds which seem incapable of imbibing any clear and definite notion of right and wrong.

Such was very much the case with William Barham; but there was another cause which had tended also to make him what he was, and which must be clearly pointed out. His father, though an excellent man and a sincere Christian, was fond of indulging in speculative opinions—not of embracing, but of discussing them—the most dangerous practice in the world before young people, for if they do not absolutely adopt the opinion that is wrong, they learn not to be quite sure that any opinion is right. The mind of Helen herself might have been affected by this fault on the part of their father, but she had two safeguards—a pure, high-spirited heart, and the memory of her mother's counsels, she having been somewhat older than her brother, and more capable of receiving principles than he was, at the time of that mother's death.

The tidings which William Barham brought were fuller than Lieberg had expected. The appearance of the servant and of the ladies was detailed with great accuracy, and even the crest upon the servant's button was known; but when Lieberg sent his valet to bring him a book that he named, in which the crests of all the principal families of England were displayed, he found that several would answer the description, which, as may easily be supposed, had not been given with true heraldic accuracy. William Barham seemed at his wits' end, when he found that this was the case; but Lieberg, whatever might be the strength of his passions, was not one of those who give them vent at every trifling obstacle. On the contrary, like the great propelling power of the present day, they were kept pent up within the iron of his bosom, but to carry him on with the fiercer vehemence to the end desired; and on this occasion he only laughed, saying—"We shall arrive at it—do not be afraid. Combining the crest with the colour of the livery, and then applying the description of the man himself and the ladies, to discriminate among the various branches of the family, we shall find out the facts. I will put it in the hands of an Argus this very night, who will ferret out the whole matter ere eight-and-forty hours be over. Difficulties, my young friend, to a man of a firm mind, and obstacles in his path, of whatever nature they may be, only afford him stronger inducements to follow his course, and render his pursuit a passion. I remember a man who was told that he could never throw the same combinations four times running with the dice, and he sat for three months in the same room till he had done it. That man was fit to struggle for an empire. And now go home, and keep yourself as quiet as may be. Have no communication of any kind with the men that you know in London, and confide no secrets to the women. Always be at your own house, so that I may find you from nine in the morning till night-fall; the rest of the four-and-twenty hours is your own."

CHAPTER XXII.

LIEBERG DISAPPOINTED.

Two days elapsed, and on the third morning Lady Malcolm was sitting in her drawing-room alone, when the servant threw open the door, and announced "Colonel Lieberg." Her visitor upon the present occasion was personally known to her, so far as a mere bow went, when they met in society. But this was the first time that he had ever presented himself at her house; and Lady Malcolm, therefore, as she well might, looked somewhat surprised when she received him. Her demeanour, however, was perfectly courteous, though somewhat distant withal, and after begging him to be seated, she inquired what fortunate circumstance procured her the honour of his visit.

"I beg your ladyship's pardon," said Lieberg, "for intruding upon you, especially at this hour of the morning; but, in truth, though I asked for you—thinking it would be more proper so to do—my visit is intended for a young lady who is, I find, under your kind care and protection, and to whom I have some intelligence to communicate, which may, perhaps, give her pleasure."

Lady Malcolm, however, had lived long enough in the great world to have the faculty of misunderstanding, when she thought proper; and she therefore replied—"I am really very sorry, Count, but Miss Carr is out, and probably will not return till the evening."

"Your ladyship is under a mistake," replied Lieberg; "my visit was not intended for the lady you mention, but for Miss Barham, who, her brother informs me, is residing at your house."

"He is quite in error," replied Lady Malcolm; "Miss Barham did, indeed, do me the favour of passing a few days with me, but she left me yesterday morning."

Lieberg's cheek grew hot; and though he still maintained the appearance of the utmost suavity, there was a certain degree of sharpness

in his tone, which showed how mortified and disappointed he was.

"Then, of course," he said, "your ladyship can favour me with her address."

"No, indeed," replied Lady Malcolm, "I cannot. All I can tell you is, that she is gone into the country."

"May I humbly inquire," rejoined Lieberg, "whether your difficulty, in regard to telling me her address, is voluntary, or from ignorance of where she is?—I beg pardon," he added, in a softer tone, "if I am asking anything extraordinary; but as I have matters of importance to communicate to Miss Barham, it is very necessary that I should learn her address by some means, in order to write to her speedily."

"To answer you candidly, Count Lieberg," replied Lady Malcolm, "and as you put the question so distinctly, I must acknowledge that I do not give you the information you wish for, partly because I have not the exact address, and partly because Miss Barham requested me not to say where she is gone to any one."

"But I should certainly think she would make an exception in my favour," said Lieberg, earnestly, "considering that business of the greatest importance, affecting her brother in the highest degree, is left entirely in my hands. I say, therefore, Lady Malcolm," he added, as that lady remained perfectly silent—"I say, therefore, that I should think she must have made an exception in my favour."

"She did not," answered Lady Malcolm, drily; "she never hinted at any exception at all; and such being the case, I cannot take upon myself to make one."

"Really, this is very extraordinary," exclaimed Lieberg; "and allow me to say, very mortifying also. Nor can I think that Miss Barham will be at all obliged to those who prevent her from receiving intelligence which it is necessary she should be made acquainted with directly."

"Indeed," said Lady Malcolm, "I feel it to be a very painful and disagreeable position; but you must see clearly, my dear Count, that I have only one course to pursue."

"No, indeed," replied Lieberg, "I cannot say that I agree with you. I cannot but think that, under present circumstances, and considering my character and station in life, you might, without hesitation or apprehension of the consequences, make that exception in my favour which I am perfectly certain Miss Barham would have done had she thought of it."

"Ay," replied Lady Malcolm, with a sly smile, "but you men are so bold and resolute, Count Lieberg, and I am but a poor timid woman, always afraid of doing wrong. You must forgive me, indeed, if I do not act as you wish; and besides, as I say, I have not got her exact address. She is to write to me in a few days, and then if she tells me to give you her address, I can send it. If not, I will write to her, and ask. This is all I can do."

The tone in which she spoke was firm and determined; and Lieberg, seeing that it was vain to press the matter further, made a virtue of necessity, saying—"Well, my dear Lady Malcolm you judge for the best, I am sure; but believe me it may cause great inconvenience, especially as I myself much want to go out of town. What a beautiful little picture that is! That must be a Correggio!"

"It is generally esteemed so," replied Lady Malcolm. And Lieberg, before he took his leave, examined the various pictures which the room contained, praising several with that degree of discrimination which took from his commendation every appearance of flattery to the taste of the lady who had selected the paintings, though in reality he was skilfully smoothing down all the feelings of irritation which he feared his own irritation might have produced. He succeeded so far as to make Lady Malcolm say to herself, after he left her, "Well, he is a very pleasant person, certainly.—But Morley is right," she added, "I would not trust him in matters such as this."

Whatever were Lady Malcolm's motives, the story which she had told Count Lieberg was perfectly true. Miss Barham had left her on the preceding day, and had gone down into the country. Juliet Carr, as she had promised when Morley first mentioned the situation of his poor protégée, had written at once to her father, asking if he would receive Helen as her companion and friend, when she herself came down, and hinting at those pecuniary arrangements which she knew would have weight with her somewhat too covetous parent.

To her surprise, however, she had received a letter by return of post, making no reference whatsoever to money matters, but "begging Juliet to ask only one question of her fair companion—namely, whether she was or was not the daughter of the Rev. Mr. Barham the curate of Elmes, in Cumberland, and if both her father and mother were dead. If so, he said, he would have the greatest pleasure in receiving her, as he had been an intimate acquaintance of her grandfather, and done what he could to prevent him from spending his fine property. He added, moreover, that if from the circumstances at which Juliet had hinted, it was more pleasant for Miss Barham to come down at once, without waiting for his daughter, he begged she would do so, and remain as long as she liked, when he would treat her in every respect as his child."

The whole letter was so unlike her father, that unless Juliet had seen the handwriting she could scarcely have believed it was his composition. That fact, however, was not to be doubted, and she accordingly showed the epistle to Helen, who immediately replied that she was the daughter of the Mr. Barham mentioned, and she had some faint idea of having heard him once or twice speak of Mr. Carr. Juliet then proposed to write back to her father and inform him that, such being the case, Helen would accompany her to Yelverly in a fortnight. But Helen laid her fair hand upon her companion's arm, and gazing earnestly in her face, replied, "I would rather go at once, if possible."

"But why so, dear Helen?" said Juliet. "Lady Malcolm wishes you to stay, and go with us to some watering-place for a time, and Morley has promised——"

"I would rather go at once," said Helen,

with that sad shake of the head which speaks that the heart is faint and weary within us; "there is much that I would willingly avoid here, in London."

Juliet understood her in a moment, and opposed her no farther; and it was settled, at Helen's own desire, that she and her maid should proceed part of the way to Yelverly on the following morning. This plan was put in execution, and Helen herself seemed more than ever anxious to fly from the scenes that surrounded her. She was to visit for one day, as she went, the house of the friend to whom she had previously written, and whose prolonged silence she did not understand; after which, she was to go on to the house of Juliet's father, and to write immediately on her arrival. Thus, Lady Malcolm could safely say that she did not absolutely know where she was, though Juliet Carr could not have done so with as much sincerity had she been present, for Helen left the address of the friend she was about to visit with her.

We will not inquire into the feelings of Lieberg as he returned to his own home, suffice it that he immediately sent for the youth, William Barham, with whom he held a long conference. At the end of their disquisition of ways and means, he despatched the lad to seek for Morley Ernstein in Berkeley Square, but that gentleman was not at home, and Lieberg himself, in riding through the park a few hours afterwards, met him walking with Lady Malcolm and a young lady, whose dazzling beauty of face and symmetry of form at once let Lieberg into the secret of a part, at least, of his friend's conduct. "Ha, this is good!" he said to himself, as he rode on after bowing to Lady Malcolm, and nodding familiarly to Morley. "This is good! However, Sir Morley, you shall not frustrate me."

Lieberg did not attempt to stop, nor appear to take any further notice of Juliet Carr; and Morley walked on by her side with very little restraint upon their feelings from the presence of Lady Malcolm. Whatever restraint did exist was, perhaps, not altogether unpleasant. It is strange to say, that the fact of being prevented from doing what we could wish to do, can ever be agreeable; and yet, though the lover may long to be altogether alone with her he loves, there is a sweet excitement in expressing all the warm and glowing feelings in the heart, by shadowy figures, half veiling, half exposing, the thoughts and the sensations that we should have told openly had there not been an indifferent ear to listen.

Good Lady Malcolm, indeed, was by no means indifferent; and though her presence, as I have said, was some restraint, yet that restraint was too small ever to be painful. The marriage of Morley Ernstein and of Juliet Carr, was a thing that she had long set her heart upon; and that they would fall in love with each other as soon as they met, was one of those facts which she had predetermined, with that peculiar sort of vaticination which many elderly ladies experience in regard to affairs of the heart. When they did meet, then, and did fall in love with each other, she received it more as a compliment to her prophetical powers than anything else; and, well pleased with them and herself, she left them to settle the rest as much to their own satisfaction as possible.

Woman's love is nursed with more visionary food than man's; and, in our cold climate at least, is of slower but more solid growth than his. Circumscribed in her sphere of action even from her childhood, her feelings and her thoughts are more concentrated within her own bosom, and fix more firmly upon the great master topic of her whole existence—love. Juliet, the reader has remarked, had recollected the early days she had passed with Morley Ernstein, better than he had done. The reason was, that she was a woman; and from a very early period, all the affections are matters of more importance to a woman than a man. She had recollected those early days, not only as a passing dream, but as a definite existence; there was scarcely a sport or a pastime which they had enjoyed together, that she could not call up before the eye of memory.

Her annual visit to Lady Malcolm too—her father allowed her to make an annual visit—called Morley frequently back to her mind, for that good friend would often talk of him in the manner which the little scheme she had established, in her own mind, suggested; and by one means or another, Juliet's imagination was supplied with plenty of food for nursing up young affection into full-grown love. Thus was it, then, that the germ of the future passion went on in her heart; so that when she saw Morley Ernstein again under the wall of his own park, it was with no slight emotion that she recognized the companion of her early days; that she beheld him far surpassing, in personal appearance, all which she had herself anticipated; that she heard the tones of the same voice, which still echoed in her ear from the pleasant places of her childhood, and that she beheld—although it was evident that he did not know her—his eyes filled with admiration, and with the promise of love. She dreamt upon that meeting for many a long day, and dreamt joyfully, though the interview itself had been mingled with some pain, in consequence of her father's harsh and rude repulse of Morley's apology for the accident which had occurred.

And now what were her feelings? Reader, she had given herself entirely to the passion that had taken its place in her heart. Everything which she had seen of Morley Ernstein was so noble, so generous, so kind, that reason confirmed all that the voice of love prompted, and told her that she might well, and without hesitation, acknowledge her choice in the eyes of all the world.

Between Morley Ernstein and Juliet Carr, difficulties were never thought of—objections were never anticipated. Morley had never asked her to wed him. He had told her of his love; he had painted it with all the fire and eagerness that he felt; he had seen that he was loved in return, and, not satisfied with that, he had drawn from her, by questions, and entreaties, and all the arts of passion, an acknowledgment that it was so. More than one day had passed in all the pleasant visions of the future, in all the words, and looks, and caresses which form

that bright and rapturous dream in which the hours of young affection fleet by. Rarely, very rarely, do lovers think much of difficulties, and certainly if there ever was a case where it seemed needless to do so, it was that of Morley Ernstein and Juliet Carr. While they were together—and it must be admitted that they were so during the greater part of each day—the minutes flew by like lightning; and had their whole lives been destined to pass in the same manner, life and death would have seemed but two points with an instant of joy between them.

There were times, however, when the ordinary proprieties of society, or the particular arrangements of Lady Malcolm, kept them apart, and in those hours Lieberg was almost always with Morley Ernstein. Now, let not the reader suppose that Morley was very foolish or very weak, for putting any trust in one who was so little trustworthy, or in associating with a man, whose views, thoughts, and principles were so different from his own. The reader, it is true, knows what were Lieberg's views, thoughts, and principles. For the eyes of the world we have drawn back the veil, and exposed his heart; but such was not the case with Morley Ernstein. No hand had laid bare for him the objects and the views of his travelling companion—no one had shown him Lieberg's dealings with William Barham—no one had told the purposes he nourished against Helen with but the more eagerness and determination from the opposition that he had met with. On all these points Morley was in the dark. He only knew Lieberg as the most fascinating person that he had ever met with; as a man full of talent, information, and taste; as one who possessed that sort of candour, which, far from concealing opinions when opposed either to the views and prejudices of others, or to the general feelings of society, rather exaggerates and aggravates them, and makes them appear worse than they really are. He knew him, besides, as one capable of doing generous actions, and at the same time denying all merit in performing them; as one, who was even at that moment sacrificing a large sum, rather than proceed to the destruction of a fellow-creature; as one who had saved his own life, and who had attended him through a long and painful sickness with the care and tenderness of a brother.

Such was the light in which Morley had alone a right to regard Count Lieberg, although his friend's openly-avowed principles, in regard to some points of morality, might well cause him to avoid as far as possible placing the fate of a young and lovely being, like Helen Barham, in any degree at his disposal. Nor did the least point appear in Lieberg's present conduct, which could excite Morley's suspicions. He entered warmly into his views for hastening the departure of William Barham from England; he drove with Morley down to the docks, for the purpose of seeking a vessel to bear the youth to a foreign land. He aided eagerly in obtaining the promise of a small place of considerable labour, but no great trust, for Helen's brother, and in every respect he seemed almost to have forgotten herself. So at least it appeared, though, indeed, if there was anything which should have excited Morley's suspicion, it was the fact of Lieberg's total silence in regard to an object which had once seemed to interest him so deeply. But Morley was not of a suspicious nature, and he judged that Lieberg, a man of the world, and a man of pleasure, had looked upon poor Helen Barham as a beautiful picture, which he had seen and perhaps desired, but had forgotten very soon.

Once, and only once, during their rambles about London, Lieberg jested with him slightly upon the subject of Juliet Carr, and claimed a right to be present at the marriage, saying—

"Pray tell the fair lady, Morley, that I pulled you out of the water just in time to fulfil your country's vulgar proverb, about the propensity to hanging counteracting the risk of a watery death."

"Oh, you shall be present," replied Morley, gaily, "but recollect, Lieberg, you have been wrong once in regard to your calculation of my proceedings, and you may be mistaken even now."

Lieberg looked at him with a quiet smile, but made no reply, and the conversation dropped there. As usually happens in London, two or three gay *fêtes* took place, as if to close the season brilliantly and, whenever it was possible, Lieberg induced his young friend to go to these parties, and introduced him to a number of the persons present. Although, by this time, all Morley's plans and purposes, in regard to the study of society, had been burnt up, like old acts of parliament, in the fire of passion, he was not sorry to see such scenes, and to know such people.

Had Morley not known Juliet Carr, he might have drunk of the cup of pleasure to intoxication; for there were many beautiful, and sparkling, and brilliant, who were right willing to lead him into paths more flowery than safe, and to assail him on all sides, with arms very difficult for a young man to resist. But Morley was defended now with that highest and noblest of armour, love for a pure and beautiful being. His life, in short, was in Juliet Carr, and all the rest around him was but a pageant or a dream.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A WORM WILL TURN.

"TAKE care you're not done, Bill—that's all I say!" was the exclamation of the good-looking, powerful fellow, who has once already been placed before the reader's eyes, under the name of Harry Martin, and who now sat with Helen's brother in the house she had inhabited. "If he gets you on board ship, you mayn't get out again, I take it; but you know your own business best. I don't like the job, I can tell you. I think you're all wrong, my lad, and you'll find it out some day.—Come, pass us another glass, and I'll be jogging.—If I were you, I would stick to my sister; she's a very good girl, I hear; and hang me, Bill, it's very well talking, but a good girl's a good girl, you know, and a bad one's a bad one—there's no mistake. You that are born a gentleman, too, I should have thought you'd something more of it in you. Why didn't ye fly at the fellow's throat when he showed you the paper, and tear it all to pieces in a minute?"

"I couldn't," said William Barham, who had been gazing down upon the floor, with a look half sullen, half ashamed; "there was a table between us, and I couldn't get at it."

"If you could get hold of that," said Harry Martin, "the job would be at an end, you know; you could do what you pleased. Can't you make him show it you again?"

The boy shook his head. "It won't do, Harry," he said; "he keeps it in a little pocket-book, with some other things; and I would have tried to get it out of his pocket quietly, as Simes showed me how one day, but you see it's an inside pocket, and I can't get at it."

"Why, for that matter, one could cut his pocket off," said Harry Martin; "and I shouldn't care if I had a hand in it; but we must have two or three, and unless there was a good deal of tin to be had besides, the men would not like to risk a trip to Botany, just to get that note of yours. However, I'll think over it, and talk with some other fellows about it, and perhaps we shall bring the thing right after all. I'll take one more glass, and then I'll go."

William Barham thought for a moment or two, and then said, "I'll tell you what, Harry, when we find out where Helen is, he's sure to go down into the country after her. Don't you think that one could do something, as he goes? He has always lots of money about him, and that gold snuff-box which there was a piece of work about once with Bill Jones, you know; and if he goes into the country for any time, his dressing-case is worth a cool couple of hundred, just to make soup of, as you call it. It's all gold and silver together."

"What! a touch of the highway, as men used to have long ago?" said Harry Martin. "But that's not so easy done now, my boy. We have changed all that—trade has fallen off sadly too. I wish those days would come again, for there's scarce a man of us keeps a horse now."

"Why, you've got your horse and gig, Harry," said the youth.

"Ay, but one can't stop a gentleman on the road with a horse and gig."

"Very true," answered William Barham; "but if he were to go down into the country, you could go after him, and make a smash of it."

The man with whom he was talking, laughed, but seemed to think the idea not a bad one. "We can't do it for nothing, Bill," he said; "though if he puts up in a place where there's something to be got, and the thing's easy, I shouldn't mind undertaking it, for your sake, though I am not a cracksman, myself—especially if it's a good way down in the country, for, you see, there's not so much chance of being pulled up for it. We could have the gig waiting, and after the job was done, get in and drive thirty miles or so, and then take the coach. All I can say is, if you choose to cut this business about your sister entirely, and want really to get out of the fellow's power, I'll help you as far as I can; so look out, there's a good boy, and let me know; for hang me if I like to see a poor girl bought and sold, like a sheep in Smithfield!—And now, good night, Bill. I would fain see you a free man again, for now you're no better than a nigger-slave in the West Indies."

Thus saying, he left him, and I will not pause to investigate and lay bare all the curious combinations in the bosom of Harry Martin, which produced his strange and anomalous notions of honour and dishonour, honesty and dishonesty. It would be a very difficult task in his case, and perhaps, if we knew all, it would not be much less so in the case of many men of far higher reputation—for too, too often, in this good world, do we see the frauds to which they are accustomed, the dishonest—ay, and criminal acts, which suit their purposes and conveniences, placed in as strange contrast with better things in the life of high and distinguished persons, "all honourable men," as the habit of plundering was, with his notions in regard to Helen Barham, in the breast of Henry Martin.

I will not delay the reader with all that took place between Lieberg and William Barham, previous to the embarkation of the latter in the river Thames, for a long and distant voyage. The whole business was conducted with the knowledge, and under the eye, of Morley Ernstein. Money was furnished to him for all necessary expenses, and Mr. Hamilton, who was now slowly recovering, promised his interest, at Morley's solicitation, to obtain advancement for the young man in the distant land to which he was going, if his conduct during a couple of years justified the belief that he would act honourably for the future. Before he embarked, he wrote a letter to Helen, and gave it into Morley's hands to put upon it the right address. Morley did so, and forwarded it himself, but no answer had been received at the time the ship dropped down the river.

Such were the principal events connected with the fate of William Barham which took place in London; but I must now suddenly change the scene, and beseech the reader to accompany me to a distant spot, and take up his abode for a short space in a small room—for the inn had no other but small rooms—in a house known by the distinctive appellation of "The Sandown Castle," in the small town of Deal.

It was night, and the wind had been blowing freshly from the westward during the whole day; but as the sun went down it increased to a gale, varying somewhat to the southward, with an unpromising blackness about the sky in that quarter, mingling with the faint red of evening, in the west and north. It was altogether as ominous and unpleasant a night to commence a long voyage upon, as any one could wish to see; and nobody whose destiny was not very well assured, would have chosen the neighbourhood of the Goodwin Sands for his night's lodging on the deep. Although the wind had got to the south, as I have said, the night was one of those which are more generally met with in this favoured climate than any other—that is to say, cold, raw, and damp, in the very midst of the summer, giving us back all our recollections of December in the heart of July.

The room of which I have spoken in the little inn, had been made as comfortable as possible, under existing circumstances. The table had

been well rubbed, to take out the marks of tumblers, imprinted in rum-and-water; the windows had been opened to "air the room"—a proceeding which, to say the truth, was not a little required, as a dull and heavy atmosphere of tobacco-smoke and mixed spirits reigned within, and seemed very ill-disposed to go out, either at door or window, in that cold and boisterous night. There was a small fire, too, in the grate, and once or twice, as the evening drew in and night fell heavy over the world, a very genteel-looking personage, with a foreign countenance, and a grave, sedate air, entered the room, looked about him to see that everything was right, put this thing and that thing in order, smoothing down a great coat, that hung over the back of a chair, stirring the fire, arranging the furniture, and doing all those little acts which give notice that some personage is expected, for whom everything must be prepared in the nicest manner.

At length, he shut the windows and lighted the candles, and in about ten minutes after, a gentleman, dressed in the very height of fashion, with a large blue military cloak, of the finest cloth, hanging from his shoulders, entered the room, and advancing to the fire, gazed into it for a minute or two in silence. The other personage whom we have mentioned, stood at a respectful distance, without saying a single word, till at length his master, for so it was, turned round and gave him his hat and wet cloak, saying, "Here, Martini, take these, and then go down to the beach. It is a terrible night, and I am uneasy about the ship—one can see the surf running upon the sands quite plain. There was a vessel too, apparently coming into the Downs, but I could make nothing of it myself, and the jargon of these pilots I do not pretend to understand. I suppose the boy will come ashore directly, of course."

"If he can, sir," replied the man, with a strong foreign accent; "but I should not like to trust myself, I know, in an open boat, on such a night as this."

"There are several boats out," said Lieberg, for it was our friend who spoke; and then making a sign for the man to leave him, he sat till nearly eleven o'clock at night in that worst of all states of idleness, the idleness of a strange inn, which is the next thing to solitary confinement. Lieberg, on most occasions, had plenty of means of employing and amusing himself, but at the present moment his mind was evidently not at ease. He gazed during the greater part of the evening into the fire, and one might have supposed that it was the thought of being baffled in his pursuit, by the destruction of the ship which bore William Barham, that troubled him, had not a word or two escaped from his lips towards the end of the period we have mentioned, which showed that, in reality, some better feelings were mingled with his emotions, and that it was about the youth himself, and the risk he ran for the time, he was anxious. The words indeed, dear reader, to which I allude, were all harsh, and, apparently, unfeeling; but still they showed that Lieberg was occupied rather with the boy's fate than with his own plans and purposes.

"Curse him!" he said, rising from his chair, towards eleven o'clock—"he may as well die that way as any other. He would be hanged, that's certain, sooner or later, if he escaped the water. So it is as well if he be drowned after all. There is no reason for my making myself uneasy about him. It might be as well, indeed, if he had some other business in hand when called upon to join the world of spirits; but I dare say, let him live as long as a patriarch, he would be engaged in some rascality at the day of his death, and as well this as anything else; so good-bye to him!"

Thus saying, Lieberg rang the bell and ordered supper to be brought, of which, when it did appear, he partook moderately, and then retired to bed, his valet having by that time returned without any tidings whatsoever of William Barham, or the ship that bore him. If the truth must be told, however, Lieberg did not sleep much, for while he was undressing, a dull, distant peal came from the sea, loud, but heavy.

"'Tis some ship firing for a pilot, sir," said his valet.

Lieberg took out his watch and listened; ere the minute was quite done, there came the roar of another gun, and then another, and another. For near an hour the same sounds went on, when all became still, except the rushing of the wind, and the heavy, thunder-like fall of the sea upon the beach. Stoicism may do its utmost, but the human heart generally finds a time to speak, and Lieberg was so evidently uneasy, that his *valet de chambre*—who had about as much feeling as that race of created beings generally have, and no more—evidently saw that his master was very much more moved than was usually the case with him, and went to bed, wondering what could be the occasion thereof—that is to say, not asking himself exactly what was the object of Lieberg's emotion, but what possibly could induce him to give way to any emotion at all.

Perceiving, however, that such was the case, and wishing, as all well-disposed *valets de chambre* are expected to do, to set his master's mind at ease, his tap was heard at Lieberg's door towards six o'clock on the following morning, and his voice exclaimed—"He is arrived, sir! The ship has gone to pieces, but all the crew are saved."

Lieberg instantly sprang up, threw on his brocaded dressing-gown, and opened the door. The man, who was standing there, pointed to the sitting-room, which was on the opposite side of the passage, and his master instantly crossed over and entered the room.

Certainly never on earth did a more disconsolate object present itself to the eyes of man, than that which was offered to Lieberg's sight by the unfortunate William Barham. He was seated on a chair by the fire—which had just been relighted and had not well burnt up—without a coat or waistcoat; his long, silky, light hair drenched with water, and hanging upon his cheeks and neck; his countenance, previously pallid with licentiousness and habits of vice, now ten times paler than ever, and purplish at the extremes, with the cold and terror he had undergone; his eyes languid, his teeth chattering, and his whole limbs trembling, while a bad cut upon his fore-

head, received in getting into one of the boats, made him look still more miserable, and a stain or two of blood oozing through the breast of his shirt, showed that he must have received some other blow upon the chest.

Lieberg was truly moved by what he saw, and exerted himself energetically to comfort and assist the unhappy young man. "Get a bed ready, and have it warmed, immediately!" he exclaimed, addressing a drowsy chambermaid, who was trying, by various pokes and thumps, to irritate the cold-hearted coals, in the grate, into some degree of warmth. "You, Martini, bring him some Madeira as quick as possible, while I get him some dry clothes."

The girl proceeded as slowly as possible, according to the usual custom of such personages; but Martini sprang rapidly to obey his master's orders, and Lieberg himself soon procured all that was necessary for arraying the unfortunate youth in dry clothing, and bringing some degree of warmth back into his chilled and exhausted frame. A surgeon also was sent for, and, as soon as possible, William Barham was placed in a warm bed, and received such treatment as the man of art thought necessary in the existing circumstances.

While this was taking place he said very little himself, only answering in a monosyllable; and Lieberg asked but few questions for the time. All that he thus learnt was, that the vessel had got well out of the mouth of the Thames, and was making the best of her way towards her destination, notwithstanding the Captain's previous intimation that he would touch at Deal, when the change of wind had forced him to try for an anchorage in the Downs, and, by some mismanagement towards nightfall, the ship, instead of getting into a place of security, had been driven upon the Goodwins, and became a complete wreck. Though the gallant boatmen of Deal had done all in their power, it had proved utterly impossible to save any one from the wreck before daybreak. But then, with great difficulty, and at the imminent risk of their own lives, the hovellers, as they are called, had contrived to bring off the whole of the crew, except one or two, who had been swept from the wreck during the night. Further particulars were obtained by Lieberg in the course of the day; and with the spirit of liberality which he always showed, he contributed largely to assist the unfortunate persons who had lost the whole of their stores in the ship, and also to reward the brave fellows who had saved their lives.

Lieberg thus occupied himself during the day, and at night returned to the inn, where his servant met him at the foot of the little stairs, and communicated to him two pieces of intelligence, the latter of which seemed to affect him the most.

"He is up, sir," said the man in a low tone, "and in the sitting-room; and he has received a letter from the post-office, addressed to William Barham, Esq., in the ship 'Mary Anne.'"

"In what sort of hand?" demanded Lieberg, eagerly. "Did you see the post-mark?"

"The hand was a very good one, sir," replied the valet. "The post-mark was Doncaster."

Lieberg started, and turned red. "Morley Ernstein's post-town!" he exclaimed. "But nonsense!" he continued, after pausing for a moment, "he is still lingering on in London. The thing cannot be. He must have got somebody to receive her in the neighbourhood;" and with some doubts still upon his mind, he mounted the staircase and entered the room, where William Barham was seated over the fire, though by this time the weather had become sultry to the feelings of every one else.

"How hot the room is!" exclaimed Lieberg, as he entered. "Tell the people to serve dinner as soon as possible.—Well, William, how do you feel now?"

"Very much bruised, and very cold," replied the youth, sullenly.

"I hear you have had a letter from your sister," said Lieberg, in a quiet, easy tone. "Pray where is she now?"

The man Martini was in the room; and it is probable that Lieberg calculated upon the youth giving him an answer at once. But William Barham still sat over the fire, without looking up, and replied—"We'll talk about that by-and-by."

"Leave the room, Martini," said Lieberg, adding, as soon as he was obeyed—"Well, William, now, where is your sister?"

The youth rose up from before the fire, and stood opposite to Lieberg, pale, ghastly, and haggard, replying, boldly—"I do not mean to say I do not know where my sister is, for I do, and I know too that you have got me in your power; but before I tell you any more, or help you any farther, I will have you promise me to settle something upon her, so that she may never want."

Lieberg gazed at him for a moment, with a dark, considering look, not unmixed with contempt, and he then replied—"Make your mind easy, she shall never want. Now answer my question, and quickly, for I do not love being trifled with."

The worm he trod upon turned against him, and the youth replied—"I shall not tell you anything more, or help you any farther, unless you give me some better assurance than that. I'll tell you what, Count; last night in the storm, when I was clinging to the wreck, I thought I heard Helen's voice in the wind, and this morning I have been thinking of her ever since I woke; and I have made up my mind sooner to die than to do anything farther, unless you will give me something, under your hand, which will ensure that she shall never be walking about the streets in misery, as I have seen some poor girls do."

Determined to win her, and thinking that no sacrifice would be too much for that object, Lieberg would not have hesitated, in the least, to make any provision for Helen that was in his power, had it not been dictated to him; but that her brother, who was bound hand and foot before him, chained to his will, as a sinner to the power of Satan—that he should turn and make conditions, excited the evil spirit that reigned in him to the very highest pitch, and made him reply, after gazing upon the youth darkly for a moment—"Very well—you would

sooner die, would you? That is easy. I had better send for a constable;" and he put his hand towards the bell, adding, as he did so—"You make your own choice, young man; but do not let any wild notions of romance enter into your head, and make you believe that you can frustrate me. You will only be hanged yourself, and make no change in your sister's fate, for I know that she is in the neighbourhood of Doncaster as well as you do. So now I shall give you into charge at once; then go down to see her, and return in time to bear testimony to your merits at the trial:" and he rang the bell.

The youth's resolution failed him; he gasped, as if he were half strangled, exclaiming—"For God's sake—for God's sake, spare me!" and thrust into Lieberg's hand—even as the landlord entered the room—the letter which he had received from Helen Barham.

Lieberg's lip curled, and grasping the letter tight, he turned round to the landlord, saying—"Is not the dinner ready? I ordered it at six precisely! What wine can you give me?" and he entered, in the calmest tone possible, into a discussion upon things to be eaten and drunk, which would not edify the reader to hear.

After he had done, and the landlord was dismissed, Lieberg walked with the letter to the window, read it attentively, took a note of one or two things on some tablets, and then returned it to William Barham.

"Mark one thing, my good young man," he said, "and recollect it well in your future dealings with me—I am not a man to be dictated to. Nothing was ever obtained from me by threat or opposition yet. What you required for your sister just now, and I would not grant, because you asked it in a high tone, I will now consent to, since you have yielded obedience, and will give you a promise under my hand of that which will always put your sister above need. Where is the paper I gave you when we were in London? I will add it to that."

The boy shook his head sadly, saying—"It is lost, with everything else that I had, in that ship. You must write it on another piece of paper."

"That I will do at once," said Lieberg, drawing a writing-desk to him. "Do not be cast down, my good youth, at your losses, I will soon repair them amply if we succeed. But come, here is the dinner, and you want some refreshment. I will write it afterwards. Sit down; what will you take—some soup, or some fish?"

The youth sat down to table with him, and Lieberg treated him with kindness. But the reader learned in the human heart need not be told, that William Barham hated him as much for his after-condescension as he did for his previous tyranny.

Lieberg kept his word. After dinner he wrote a promise, which was quite as satisfactory to William Barham as such a promise could be: he provided him also with all that was necessary for his comfort, while weakness obliged him to remain in Deal, and gave him money to journey to London as soon as he had taken some repose, charging him strictly, however, to go to the house he had formerly inhabited, and keep himself out of sight of Sir Morley Ernstein. Lieberg himself set off early in the following morning for London, proposing to go down at once to Doncaster, in pursuit of Helen, but hoping to return successful ere many days were over.

Not wishing his proceedings to be particularly remarked, and fearing that he might meet some one in the coach who knew him, Lieberg had come down to Deal in his own carriage, and in it he returned; but scarcely was he gone, when William Barham demanded at what hour the coaches started, and in less than half an hour after he also was on his way to town, with feelings of hatred in his heart towards him who had just left him, which were not without their fruit in due time.

CHAPTER XXIV.

HELEN IN DANGER.

WEND back with me, dear reader, into that distant part of the country where this tale first began; not exactly, indeed, to the same scene, but to a spot about three or four miles from Morley Court, which you have already heard of, under the name of Yelverly. The aspect of that place, and of the whole country round it, was so peculiar, that I should have wished to pause, and give some description of the house and grounds, even if I had not been impelled to do so by the necessity of the case. But there are things to come, which may render it requisite that the reader's eye should be able to call up, like a magistrate, each individual part of the scene before it, and examine it strictly as a witness in regard to the events that are taking place.

The house of Yelverly was a curious old stone structure, of firm and solid masonry, on which few repairs had taken place, for few had been necessary, but which had been subjected to several alterations, as was evinced by apertures blocked up here and there, and by the lines of different coloured stone-work, which indicated that the tops of the windows, which were now square, had once displayed pointed, or Tudor arches. What the building had originally been I do not know, probably some dependence of a monastery or abbey in the neighbourhood. It was grey, and cold, and flat, with the windows apparently scattered over the face of it by accident, each having been put in, beyond all doubt, wherever it was found convenient; here, to light one room—there, to light another; at one point to clear up the obscurity of a staircase—at a second, to let the sun shine into a passage.

As if to disfigure the front more completely, a penthouse had been thrown out from one side, at the height of about ten feet from the ground, covering an eighth part of the building, and rendering the rooms thus sheltered dull and sunless enough. The principal door would have been as ugly as the rest of the house, had it not possessed an old-fashioned stone porch, with a seat on either side, which, by no means beautiful in itself, yet relieved the eye, in some degree, by breaking the flatness of the building.

Before the house, extended a long grass court, up which no carriage could drive, and which was separated from a cross road that ran in front, by a wall about three feet high, surmounted by a row of tall, thin, iron railings. The ornaments of the court were ten magnificent old yew trees, forming, as it were, a sort of avenue from the gate in the iron railing, up to the door of the house, the trees being ranged at equal distances on either side, and a small path, formed of dumpling-like stones placed edgeways, running between them. On either side the court was flanked by a tall brick wall, and the only entrance for a carriage was down a narrow lane at the side, which led by some gates into a large paved court behind.

The country round was of a very curious aspect. For more than a mile on either side, it displayed chiefly fine old grass-land, separated into fields of every size and shape by thick-set hedges, well kept, but totally without trees. The scenery, though not at all mountainous, or even hilly, might be called hillocky, for it was so undulating, that if a field contained more than four acres, it was certain to have in it both a hill and a valley; and through several of the latter ran a clear trout-stream, giving great luxuriance to the grass, and rendering it the finest pasture-ground in the world. There was an air, however, of bareness about the landscape, from the want of trees, which accorded well with the bald antiquity of the old house, and on a summer evening, when the sun was going down, and the slant beams peered over the green uplands, one might sit in that stone porch, and fancy oneself a yeoman of the olden time, so much did the ancient aspect of the whole scene sink into the heart.

It was on such a summer evening, then, that old Carr, the miser—as he was called in the neighbourhood,—walked forth between those black yews with fair Helen Barham. Nature, who loves contrasts, and who places the bright red berries amidst the dark green leaves, might well be satisfied with the opposition of those two: Helen, as she came forward, the picture of youth and grace and wild simplicity; and Robert Carr, with age, and heaviness, and slow computation in all his steps and looks. I have already described his personal appearance, and have only to add, in that respect, that he seemed to the eye much more aged when on foot than on horseback, as is very often the case. His hair was not white, indeed, but it was very thickly mingled with grey, and though he was not fat, yet, as I have said, he was heavy. His step was deliberate and weighty, and his face, which had certainly once been handsome, was marked with many lines, which one might have taken for the traces of strong passions, had it not been for the thoughtful, calculating expression of the countenance, which seemed utterly at variance with passion of any sort but one. The greed of gain was written there in characters easily read, though it also was of its particular kind. It was more the eagerness of the beast of prey, than the spirit of petty accumulation; nor was it alone the rapacity of the wolf, for the subtlety of the fox was there also.

The eyes were bent down upon the ground all the time he walked, but the right eyebrow was raised up and down, as the feelings, called forth by the conversation, produced any change upon his countenance, and always, while he was listening, his upper lip was raised on the opposite side, displaying a long, fang-like tooth, with much of the look of a dog when one strives to take away a bone. He must have been a tall man and powerfully formed, though now very much broken; and it is said that he beat another attorney almost to death in the streets of York, for having foiled him in an unjust suit. The other prosecuted him, indeed, for an assault; but by some of the extraordinary loopholes of the law, Robert Carr crept through the danger, and escaped unpunished.

He did not give his arm to Helen Barham as they walked, but held a thick staff in his right hand, with which he steadied his steps, and strove to give himself the appearance of youthful firmness. He had shown to Helen Barham so much kindness and courtesy since her arrival, however, that she would have been very willing to pass over the want of any small attention, even had she perceived it, which certainly she did not; and, walking on beside him, with her bonnet loosely thrown on, her rich hair clustering round her beautiful face, a look of thoughtful sadness in her dark bright eyes, and a somewhat listless grace in all her movements, very different from the wild buoyancy of her step before she knew Morley Ernstein, she listened to the old lawyer's questions, and gave him true and simple answers, with little or no reservation, for he did not touch upon any of those points where she might have found some difficulty in framing her reply.

"And so," said old Carr, "your brother is seventeen years of age."

"Nearly eighteen," replied Helen; "his birthday is in December."

"A cold month," said the lawyer—"mine is in October. And so you left him in London?"

"Yes," replied Helen, "but he was very speedily to sail for the West Indies."

The old man started—"Sail for the West Indies!" he exclaimed. "Sail for the West Indies! That is very unfortunate. What could make him think of such a thing as that?—that is very unfortunate, indeed!"

"Perhaps not so much as you imagine," said Helen, colouring, and determined to meet the point at once, with the general truth, lest she should be cross-questioned in regard to the particulars. "My poor brother had got into very bad society, I am sorry to say, and some kind and generous friends have obtained for him a small post in one of those colonies."

"He must come back!" said the old lawyer. "I was just going to bid you invite him down here. Do you think he is gone? Are you sure he is sailed?"

"By this time he certainly is," replied Helen. "In your kind daughter's letter, which I received two or three days ago, she informed me of the day that he was to sail, and enclosed to me a letter from himself, confirming the same tidings, and bidding me write to him at Deal, as that would be the last opportunity of communicating

with him ere his departure. I wrote yesterday, accordingly."

"That is very unlucky," said the old man, "and now the post is gone out. He must come back!"

"Nay," answered Helen, somewhat surprised, and, to say the truth, thinking the old gentleman verging towards dotage. "It will be better for him, I believe, to stay where he is. You know that he has no means of gaining his bread in England, and there at least he has a provision."

"I know," said the lawyer, impatiently. "You are all poor—you are all beggars—Juliet said so. But, I tell you, your brother must come back—he is heir to a large property unjustly withheld from him, and I will undertake to cause restitution. Why, I have got all the papers myself! I did not know, till Juliet wrote, that your father had any children; and your father himself was a fool, and would not let me act for him; but would have suffered you both to live like beggars and die on a dunghill, out of a mere idle whim. But your brother will be wiser, and I will get back the estates for him, if he will give me—give me ten thousand pounds."

Helen smiled, and in gayer days she might have laughed, though many things that the lawyer had said had made her shrink as if he had put his hand upon a wound.

"Where is my brother to get ten thousand pounds, think you, Mr. Carr?" she said. "We are, as you said, if not quite beggars, very nearly so, and I think poor William would find it difficult to find ten thousand pence."

"I mean—I mean," cried Mr. Carr, "he shall give me ten thousand pounds when I have got the property for him. I will stand all the expenses in the mean while. Ten thousand pounds shall cover all, and he shall give me a bond to pay it when I have got back the property for him. I will be like the quack doctors—'no cure, no pay,' my dear Miss Barham. Ha, ha, ha!" and he laughed aloud. "Why the thing is as easy as possible," he continued; "the name is William Henslow Barham in the deed, and his name was John."

"John was my grandfather's name," said Helen—"that I know very well, because I have his miniature set in gold, with the name at the back, with the day of his birth, and his age when it was taken."

"To be sure," said old Carr, "his name was John. It was your great grandfather's name that was William, and the drunken clerk made a mistake in copying the old deeds. He shall have it back, every inch of it, and Warmstone Castle and all; and you, my dear young lady—why you will be a fortune. There is an old settlement, I know, providing for younger children. There will be plenty of back rents to pay, enough to beggar him, the coxcomb! Ha, ha, ha!" and again the old lawyer laughed at some merry subject in his own breast.

Helen, too, looked joyfully up, for the words of Mr. Carr awakened in her bosom various memories of the past, and convinced her that, whether he was right or wrong in the expectation of recovering a fortune for her brother, there was not wanting a foundation for what he said. She remembered, in her father's room, at the Rectory, an old water-colour painting, dim with dust and age, but under which she had often spelt in early years, the words "Warmstone Castle, the seat of John Henslow Barham, Esq;" and she remembered upon one occasion hearing her father and a neighbouring clergyman commenting upon the drawing while she was standing near. Her father had then replied, in answer to some question put by his friend, "How did we lose the property? By the simplest process in the world. My father was a prodigal, and his son an honest man. This is the way that half the properties in Europe are lost."

The words had made an impression at the time, and Helen recollected them now, so that she gained, in some degree, a clue to the old lawyer's thoughts; and her heart, it must be owned, rejoiced; not for her own sake, poor girl, but for the sake of her brother. Her fancy was a lively one, and in an instant it presented to her mind's eye that unhappy young man, freed from all the troubles and difficulties in which he had placed himself, and—like him who was afterwards the victor of Agincourt—shaking from him the vices of his youth when placed in a loftier station.

She soon returned to a consciousness of the questions which Mr. Carr was asking her, and to which, for a time, she had returned but irrelevant answers. She promised immediately to write to her brother urging him to return; or, at least, to tell him the facts, and let him return if he thought fit; and the conversation soon led to her own recollections of former times, in regard to which Mr. Carr cross-examined her as if she had been a witness at the Old Bailey.

There was something, however, Mr. Carr suffered to appear, which surprised and puzzled Helen in some degree. His words led her to imagine that her father had known fully that a fortune of considerable amount was due to himself and his children, but that on some account he had refused, or neglected to claim it. Helen inquired why, and more than once during their walk pressed Mr. Carr upon the subject. That gentleman would give her no distinct information, however, sometimes saying that it was a whim, sometimes saying that it was laziness; but, in truth, Mr. Carr did not choose to tell Helen that it was a conscientious scruple which had prevented Mr. Barham from pursuing the course pointed out by his legal adviser. There was something in the truth and simplicity of that sweet girl's heart which was formidable to knavery; and Mr. Carr at once understood that there would be difficulties with her which might not exist in the case of her brother, and he therefore avoided the question altogether.

They strolled on slowly till it was nearly dusk, and then returned towards the house, still conversing on the same subject, when, as they approached the front gate, walking over the crown of one of the little hilly fields in the neighbourhood, Mr. Carr's eyes were astonished and dazzled by the sight of a very handsome carriage standing opposite the iron railings, with two post-horses, hot and panting with a long stage.

"Who can that be?" said the old lawyer.

"Thank God, I have not seen fools in gilded carriages for a long time! It must be either for you, Miss Barham, or there must be some mistake."

"Perhaps it is Morley Ernstein!" thought Helen Barham; but she did not speak it, for that was a name which deep feelings in her own bosom had prevented her from uttering once to the cold ear of Mr. Carr; and now, the very thought of Morley, probably, being there, made her heart flutter violently.

There was a servant out of livery standing at the carriage door, but no one was in the inside of the vehicle, and the iron gate was open. In the porch of the house, too, through the avenues of yews, could be seen one of Mr. Carr's maid-servants, as if looking out for his return; and, as soon as they were within hearing, the girl exclaimed, in a jargon which I shall not attempt to transpose to these pages—"There's a gentleman, sir, in the drawing-room, waiting to speak with Miss Barham upon business."

"Business!—Let me go in with you, Miss Barham," said the old lawyer; "perhaps my advice may be of use."

And as Helen saw no reasonable objection to be offered, she did not object, though she would rather have gone in alone. Her heart throbbed, and her knees somewhat trembled, but nobody could have perceived her agitation in the easy, graceful step in which she advanced towards the door of the drawing-room.

When she entered, however, all agitation ceased, though not surprise, for the person who came forward to meet her, with calm and tranquil aspect, was no other than Colonel Lieberg, who had been standing near the table, with his hat in his hand, waiting for her arrival, and affecting to look over an old illustrated copy of Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," which the lawyer, from some unaccountable motive, would always have in a conspicuous part of the drawing-room.

"My dear Miss Barham," said Lieberg, taking her hand, with a smile, which certainly was as bright and engaging as any that ever crossed a mortal lip—"I dare say you are surprised to see me here; but, having obtained your address from your friends in London, I came hither with all speed from Doncaster, where I had some business to transact, knowing that you must be very anxious about your brother."

Helen glanced her eye to Mr. Carr, who was now entering the room, and lest Lieberg should suffer the secret of her brother's conduct to escape, she introduced the Count to her host, saying, "Colonel Lieberg—Mr. Carr;" and then immediately added, "I heard from my brother, sir, the other day. He wrote me a letter which quite relieved my apprehensions regarding him. I am very much obliged to you, indeed, however, for the kind trouble that you have taken. Pray sit down."

While she had been speaking, Lieberg with cool effrontery had measured Mr. Carr from head to foot with his eye, and returned his bow with a cold and stately inclination of the head. He turned to Helen, however, as soon as he had done so, saying—"I imagine from your words that my visit has been more useful than I expected, dear Miss Barham, for I have outran bad news that might have alarmed you."

Helen turned somewhat pale; for the idea of her brother having committed some fresh crime or folly was the first that imagination presented. Lieberg, however, who marked each variation of her cheek, hastened to relieve her.

"Do not be frightened," he said, "the danger is all past now. Your brother is well, and in safety; I left him at Deal, two days ago, but he was soon to follow me to London. The vessel he was in was wrecked upon the Goodwin Sands."

Helen clasped her fair hands together, and looked up to heaven, in Lieberg's eyes more beautiful than any object that he had ever beheld on earth. Had he dared, he would have thrown his arm round her, carried her, willingly or unwillingly, to the carriage at the gate, and bade the postillion drive anywhere on earth, so that he might secure possession of her. Such were the feelings which had grown up in his heart under the influence of opposition and disappointment; but, as is too usual, his demeanour was the most opposite that it is possible to imagine.

"Come, my dear young lady, sit down," he continued, "and do not let this matter agitate you. Poor William certainly has had a very narrow escape, and remained all night upon the wreck with the sea washing over him; but he was much better when I left him, though somewhat bruised and chilled."

"Poor boy!" exclaimed Helen. "Oh! how I wish I could be with him!"

"That is what I was about to propose," said Lieberg, in a quiet, easy manner. "I think it would be better for you to be with him, for he really needs some nursing, and a sister's care and tenderness may make the difference of life and death to him."

"Good God!" cried Helen—"what shall I do? There is no one to take care of him there!—The very maid I have taken with me——"

"Nay," answered Lieberg, "do not suppose that I would leave him without aid, Miss Barham, if not on his own, on your account. I would not act such a part, believe me. I left him attended by a skilful surgeon, with plenty of money and every convenience; and in London I gave directions to my own servants to watch for his arrival in town, and treat him as if he were my own brother. You think me very hard-hearted and unkind, I see."

"Oh, no, no!" exclaimed Helen, clasping her hands again: "God in heaven will bless you! I will pray to him to bless you for your kindness and humanity to that poor boy."

A dark shade came over Lieberg's countenance, as it had done once before when Helen had used nearly similar expressions; but some words she added immediately afterwards, changed his feelings, whatever they were, making him believe himself on the point of succeeding to a greater extent than he had even dared to hope would be the case so speedily.

"What shall I do?" exclaimed Helen. "I wonder what I ought to do?"

Lieberg paused for a moment, not to seem too eager, and then replied—"I cannot think that

you will hesitate, dear Miss Barham. Your brother wants much tendance and care, and——"

"Go, my dear young lady—go!" said Mr. Carr, much to Lieberg's surprise, at finding so unexpected an ally. "His life is infinitely valuable just now; and as you ought not to travel alone, I think I will go with you. We will have a post-chaise over to Doncaster to-morrow, and then take the coach to London."

Lieberg's countenance fell, and his expectations likewise. He laid a strong curse upon the old man in his own mind, and still more so, when Mr. Carr, with the sarcastic bitterness he sometimes displayed, added—"Colonel Lieberg would doubtless have much pleasure in escorting you, but I think my plan is the most proper one."

Lieberg was instantly upon his guard, and he replied—"Most certainly, my dear sir; and though I should have been very happy to escort Miss Barham, yet I could scarcely have done so to-morrow, as I have business of importance to transact at Doncaster. There is one little matter I have to settle with you also, Mr. Carr," he continued; "you are, I think, the proprietor of the manors of Yelverly and Maxtown, and wish to let the sporting for the next year?"

Mr. Carr's face assumed quite a different aspect; he smiled graciously upon Lieberg, and replied that such was certainly the case. He had long given up shooting himself, he said—his family required very little game; it annoyed him to deal with poachers continually; and therefore he always liked to let his manors when possible; that the two years' lease of them had lately fallen in, and the gentleman who had before taken them, being but a poor, second-rate sort of man, had not been able to keep them on. There could not be better manors in Europe, he continued. There were the finest covers it was possible to see; the best partridge-ground in Europe; trout-streams, where the fish jostled each other in the river; and moors, the higher parts of which were actually swarming with grouse and black game.

Lieberg appeared charmed with the account, regretted that it was too late to take a canter over the ground that afternoon, but added, that he would return the next morning to see them, that he might know how the ground lay. He imagined, he said, that he could not find an inn without either returning to Doncaster or going on to Bingley, and he should prefer the latter, as it was much nearer, and there were also two manors there which he had heard of, and which he could see early in the morning, before he returned.

Now, Lieberg had taken care to get plenty of good information at Doncaster, and knew perfectly well that, in a sporting point of view, the manors at Bingley were infinitely preferable to those of Mr. Carr. Mr. Carr was very well aware of the same fact, and, bent upon taking in Lieberg to hire the sporting of his manors, instead of the better ones a little further on, he was himself taken in to ask Lieberg to stay the night, which was all that his visitor wanted. It may seem that he employed a complicated manœuvre to obtain that end, but in truth it was a very simple one, with a man who knew the facts, and saw profoundly into the heart, as Lieberg did.

Mr. Carr assured him that, after the manors of Yelverly and Maxtown, the two manors at Bingley were not worth his seeing. He took down the county map, and demonstrated to him that the estates could not be compared for a moment, with as much ease as any other falsehood can be demonstrated when there is nobody to contradict it. If Colonel Lieberg would do him the honour of taking a bed at Yelverly, they could very easily ride over the manors in the morning, before it was necessary for himself and Miss Barham to set off for Doncaster. The coach from York was late ere it passed, he said, and they had plenty of time before them.

Lieberg, on his part, affected to be afraid of putting Mr. Carr to inconvenience—there was his servant, too; he really thought he had better go on to Bingley for the night. But Mr. Carr was determined that such should not be the case—a bed could be found for the servant, too. His calculation was, that the whole expenses of Lieberg's stay, even if his servant had beer and meat for supper, and the Count himself took a glass of wine before he went to bed, could not amount to four shillings, while, if he missed the opportunity of letting his shooting for two years, it might be a couple of hundreds of pounds out of his pocket, besides all the expenses of gamekeepers, lookers, &c. The matter, then, was at length arranged, the post-horses sent away, Lieberg's carriage placed in the yard, and his valet, with his goods and chattels, brought into the house.

The Count very soon suffered to appear, without saying so directly, how much he proposed to give for the shooting he desired, and from that moment Mr. Carr's civilities knew no bounds. Tea was sent for, and Helen Barham presided over the "odoriferous infusion," as some gentleman, prodigal of fine words, has called it; while Lieberg, seating himself by her side, put forth all his powers of fascination, which, as we have before informed the reader, were anything but small. He had a peculiar habit of fixing his large dark eyes, with all their deep, intense light, upon the persons to whom he spoke, not with what is termed a stare, or anything that could be looked upon as rude or annoying; but with a sort of thoughtful interest, as if that glance established a communication between his soul and theirs, making thought answer to thought, before any words were spoken. There was something overpowering in it, especially when he used all his exertions to please, as he did this night; and in truth, as he sat there, gazing on the lovely face of Helen Barham, it might well put one in mind of the serpent fascinating the bright birds of the warm climates of the south, by the lustre of his dangerous eyes.

In this case, however, the bird had a talisman which set such magic at defiance. Upon Helen Barham it had no more effect than to make a few hours pass pleasantly, and occupy her somewhat sad and wandering thoughts. Reader, she was in love with another!

What was the effect upon Lieberg himself? His arts recoiled and wounded him; her beauty, her grace, her talents, her enthusiasms, all struck and captivated him more than he had ever been

with any other mortal being; but, strange as it may seem, her indifference attracted him more than all. He saw it—he could not help seeing it. There was something to conquer, and he resolved to conquer it. But how?—that was the question. It mattered not! Lieberg was one who had few scruples of any kind. "Once she be mine," he thought, "I will soon teach her to love me. First let me overcome her, and the rest will be easy enough."

Helen grew much more cheerful under his influence, and was prevailed upon, ere the evening came to an end, to sit down to Juliet's piano, and sing one of those songs for which her full rich voice was peculiarly adapted. It was at Mr. Carr's request that she did so, and he named a song that he had heard his daughter sing.

Helen had sung it many a time before; and she sat down without dreaming that either the words or the music would touch her in the least; but the changes that are within us affect the influence of all external things upon ourselves, fully as much as the changes of external things affect our feelings. Since last she had sung that song, there was a new spirit in the breast of Helen Barham, and a new sensation—love and hopelessness. The song seemed entirely altered to her. It spoke to her heart; it seemed to thrill through her bosom; it was like the voice of her own sorrows poured forth whether she would or not; and the very feeling with which she sang, the expression she gave to each note, acted upon herself even more than upon those that heard her, and made the tears rise in her eyes, and well-nigh overflow when she had done.

The song had a great effect upon Lieberg, too; it made him sad, though it excited him; it seemed like the voice of an angel singing to a fallen spirit, mourning over his degradation and loss, and drawing from his heart tears of regret, though not of repentance—the glow of shame, though not of contrition. For, as the inspired writer says—"There is a shame that bringeth sin; and there is a shame which is glory and grace." There were moments with him, as with all others like him, when he felt the bitterness of wrong, but without even a dream of turning unto right; and one of the times at which that feeling was most strong upon him was when he heard plaintive music.

Such was the case now; and when Helen had done, when she had turned away till the drops had disappeared from her eyelids, and looked round again, she saw Lieberg sitting with his head bent thoughtfully forward, his eyes fixed sadly upon the ground, and his whole attitude and look displaying deep and sad abstraction. Had Helen's affections been free, that would have been the moment in which Lieberg would have made more impression upon her than at any other, for the widest door of woman's heart is pity, and he seemed sorrowful.

The effect soon passed away with the whole party, and not long after, Mr. Carr left the room for a moment, to see for some supper, as he expressed it. Strange to say, Lieberg was agitated; he, the calm, the composed, the immovable, felt shaken in a way that he had never known in all his earthly course before; and angry at himself for what he called such weakness, he at length drew a little nearer to Helen's side—who, as if placed in stronger opposition than ever to him, was not in the least degree agitated or embarrassed—and said—"Dear Miss Barham, I wish very much to obtain a few minutes' private conversation with you."

Helen looked a little surprised, but answered with a degree of calmness that provoked him—"Certainly!—I suppose about my brother, of course—I hope there is nothing worse concerning him to be told me, Count Lieberg!"

Lieberg resolved to keep her imagination at work, and he replied—"Nothing worse exactly, but still something of much importance."

"Can you not tell me now?" she asked, eagerly; but ere he could reply, Mr. Carr returned, and did not quit the room again, till Helen Barham rose and proposed to retire to rest.

Lieberg and Mr. Carr sat for about a quarter of an hour after she was gone, and the Count then was shown to his room, which he found a very comfortable one; while the display of all his dressing apparatus had given it even an air of splendour, notwithstanding the dimity curtains, and the plain Kidderminister carpet. The valet, Martini, was still busy, arranging everything in the place, when Lieberg entered, and the Count having made him take out some writing materials, sat down, and wrote—

"Dear Miss Barham—Will you kindly write underneath, merely in pencil, at what time to-morrow I can have a few minutes' conversation with you alone, upon the subject that we mentioned?"

"There, take that!" he said, folding up the paper, "and find out Miss Barham's maid directly; bid her give it to her mistress, and let me have an answer."

The valet took the note, and disappeared. Helen's toilette for the night was well-nigh done, and she was on the point of seeking her bed, when she received it; and, guileless and innocent herself, without a thought of evil, she wrote underneath the lines sent by Lieberg, in pencil, "Whenever you like.—Helen Barham."

When the note was brought back, Lieberg gazed at it with a keen, triumphant look, though his cheek was pale with intense feeling.

"Do you know which is Miss Barham's room?" he said, addressing the valet.

"The one at the end of the corridor, sir," said the man; "that on the right; the opposite door leads to a store-room, I find."

"And where do you sleep yourself, Martini?" said Lieberg.

"I sleep just above Miss Barham's room, sir," replied the man.

"Get a horse early to-morrow," said Lieberg; "go over to the post-office at Doncaster, and let me have my letters before eleven."

The man bowed, and very little further conversation took place, while Lieberg undressed, and retired to bed. His last words were, "Leave the light burning."

As soon as the man was gone, Lieberg rose from his bed again, carefully cut the sheet of note-paper on which he had written to Helen in

two, separating the part containing his inquiry from Helen's reply, burnt the former part, and then gazed steadfastly upon the other, repeating —"Whenever I like!—whenever I like!—I like this very night!—This shall justify me;" and putting the paper into his desk, he extinguished the light, and retired to bed again, but not to sleep.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE BURGLARS' COUNCIL.

FOR a short space we must not only leave sweet Helen Barham in the house of Yelverly, but Lieberg, with all machinations in his head, and turn to schemes of a different kind, and at a different spot. It was in the back room of a low public-house that, on the very day which witnessed Lieberg's arrival in London from the town of Deal, there sat together four as powerful and determined-looking fellows as ever perhaps met, with a view of consulting upon the grand purpose of cutting a purse, or proving that there are other people, as well as the little god of love, who can laugh at locksmiths. In the chair—for it will always be found, in civil and political matters alike, that the meetings which assemble for the purpose of setting all laws and regulations at defiance, must have their laws and regulations likewise—in the chair of this gallant and respectable assembly, was placed that worthy gentleman, Harry Martin, whom we have had the honour of bringing before our readers on more than one occasion. On his right was a gentleman who was delivering himself with a great deal more eloquence than is usually met with, either on the hustings or the Commons House of Parliament—though, like the oratory of those places, his had its peculiar characteristics, which suited it to the auditory who were to hear it—he was delivering himself, I say, of a speech, the tendency of which, however, was to incite his hearers to undertake a great enterprise; and an expedition against Carthage, or a war against Philip, was never debated with more vehemence and animation.

"I'll tell you what, Simes," he said—"you think that Martin and I do this out of regard to Bill Barham; but I tell you it is no such thing. I do it only because I think that such good luck does not fall in a man's way every day. Did you ever see a blackbird, on a sunshiny morning, sitting upon a bough, and singing as quietly as I might do at the club? Well, if he sees a great fat worm wriggle out his head, down he pounces upon him, and never ceases pulling till he has got him all out of his hole. Well, I am the blackbird, and this old Miser Carr is the worm. I have sat cherupping here in London for a long while, till I got scent of this old fellow, and now I'll pounce upon him just like a sparrowhawk upon a ground-lark. We will get help enough, if you don't like to go; it's not every man that has the same liberality of feeling as you think you have, to refuse his share of four or five thousand pound, just for a little bit of a smash that can be done in a minute, and we can be all over to Sheffield again, and then to London, before any one knows that we have been in the place at all. If the thing were to be done near town, I would not press it upon you, gentlemen, for there's all the risk in the world of being trapped, if we do such things too near home. But down there it's easy to do, and not easy to discover; and when four or five thousand pound is to be got, it's worth the touch of a crow-bar, or ten minutes' work with the centrebit."

"Ay, but there's the job!" cried the man he called Simes; "I want to be made sure that the thing's worth the journey. I can pick up a nice little living here in London, without going down into Yorkshire, and perhaps getting myself hanged into the bargain; so let me be sure, I say, that there is this tin, or I shall say, I would rather be excused. I am not fond of eating an empty pudding, and do not particularly like the cord-wainers' company."

"Why, as for that, Mr. Simes," observed a stout man, with a hawk's nose, on his right hand; "you see I knew the country well enough, not long ago, when I used to do a little with the thimbles, at Doncaster. You may recollect that we, one time, had an engagement with the other gentlemen of the course; but they were too much for us, and drove us off with the butt ends of their horsewhips, and then we scattered about the country. Well, I had a gossip with one of the maids there, and sold her some real French muslin, which I picked up at York, and I asked her all about her master, old Carr, the miser, as they called him in those parts, and she said he was prodigious rich, and never had less than two or three thousand pounds in the house, besides lots of plate."

"You hear, Simes," said Harry Martin; "so you see, whatever you may think, we don't stand only upon what Bill Barham says, because Bill does not know whether the man's rich or poor, and only knows that he's called Carr, the miser. However, you shan't want for full information; Bill has promised to bring some one with him here to-night who knows the whole place and the people round about, for he was the Squire's groom at Bingley, which is close by. His name's Andrews, and he's now in another way of business, as a horse-dealer—and has done a clever thing or two."

"Oh, yes," replied Simes, "I know him very well—a pleasant gentleman he is. He sold old Major Groundsell the same horse three times over; first, as a black horse, with not a spot of white about him; then with the two fore-feet white; and then he shaved him, docked him, and made another creature of him; but the Major could never ride him first nor last."

"No, nor anybody else," said another of the men present, "for he was a plunger, a bolter, and a rearer, and when he couldn't get you off he went over with you."

"A pleasant chap to be on the outside of," said Harry; "but let us have some more lap. Mr. Simes, may I trouble you to ring the bell. Oh, here comes Bill, and Mr. Andrews too! Mr. Andrews, good evening to you—I hope you're well, sir."

Fresh supplies of drink were brought, and as

soon as the room was again clear, the subject matter of the debate was once more brought forward, and the account given by Mr. Tony Andrews was so conclusive, that even the cautious soul of Mr. Simes was fired with generous ardour, and it was determined, nem. con., that the thing should be undertaken. As soon as this was settled, William Barham—who occupied a seat by the side of Harry Martin, but a little behind the general line, not being one of the active participators in the enterprise—whispered a word or two in his friend's ear, who immediately pronounced a new oration upon the occasion. The tendency of the harangue was to show the absolute necessity that there existed of setting about the thing at once; but in this, Martin met with no opposition whatsoever, for every man present was a veteran in his profession, and knew well that in great undertakings promptness of execution is only secondary to maturity of deliberation.

"I'm ready this minute," said Simes—"I only want to go home to get a tool or two."

"And I think there's no time to be lost either," said the man with the hook nose. "But," continued he, turning his left eye downward, and looking with that orb alone into the bottom of his glass with an air of deliberate wisdom—"but how are we to go? If we four get upon the mail together, the guard will be in such a fuss about his bags, that he'll blow who we are, all the way down. Then, I think, Harry, you talked of your mare and the gig; but your mare can't run half the way, and the gig won't hold four, though I've seen you put three into it, and bad enough it looked."

"Oh, I'll lend you a phaeton for one horse," cried Mr. Andrews—"and if Mr. Martin can make him run forty miles before this time tomorrow, I'll give you a note to a friend of mine at ——, who will contrive to horse you on. You see, gentlemen, I shall expect a trifle—not so much, in course, as if I went out of town myself, but say a tenth, and upon honour."

The claim was agreed to, upon the condition of the horses being all ready and no mistakes make; and then the gentleman with the beak again brought his peculiar eye to bear upon the lump of sugar at the bottom of the tumbler, and remarked—"What I said myself, just now, gives me a good hint. Suppose we were to get Jerry Knowles and Sam Harrison to——"

"Oh, that will never do," cried Mr. Andrews, who was a man that stood upon his reputation, "those gentlemen have such a bad character that we must not bring them into the business, for there's always somebody looking out after them."

"That's the very reason," said the other. "You gentlemen from Yorkshire are so quick, that you see gooseberries upon cherry trees. These are the very men who ought to be employed for what I mean. The worse, the better for my purpose. We put dung upon a field, to make it bear, not ice cream. What I mean to say is, that everything is good in its way, and these gentlemen, though they certainly have gained themselves a reputation, may very well serve my purpose."

"Well, well! what is it?" exclaimed Harry Martin, impatiently, for he loved long speeches in nobody's mouth but his own. "Speak out, and let us hear!"

"It is," answered the hook-nosed man, "that they should be sent down by coach to Doncaster, with a promise of a five-pound note each, if the thing answers. They can go down by coach, you know, and be absent for a day or two, and go back again, taking care to get into mischief, and to have proof of where they were."

"Oh, I understand—I understand!" cried two or three voices at once.

"As a blind," said Harry Martin—"a devilish good plan; and then if they get into the brown jug, we must give them a trifle more."

Some further conversation in the same strain took place; and then Harry Martin said in a low voice to William Barham—"But what share are you to have, Will?"

"Not a farthing," answered the boy eagerly, "not a farthing. If you get me those papers that's all I care about. He always carries them in a Russia leather pocket-book, in a pocket inside his coat. It is a brown pocket-book, you know, with a steel spring and clasp."

"But are you sure he is there?" asked Martin.

Bill nodded his head, saying, in a low tone—"Helen is there, and he'll find a way to fix himself where she is. But the papers are all I want."

"Well, well, you shall have them," answered Harry; "and if I find the fellow himself, I'll put my mark upon him. Now, Simes, you get your tools, and I'll get mine and have the horse in the phaeton before a couple of hours are over. Let's all meet and have a little supper here at ten o'clock, and then we can drive out pleasant by the moonlight."

The rest of their arrangements were soon settled, and the party separated; William Barham returning to his own abode, where he remained for several days, waiting, with no light anxiety, to hear the result of an enterprise which was first devised for his benefit.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A DISAPPEARANCE.

No sleep visited the eyes of Everard, Count Lieberg. He heard people moving about, doors opened and closed, and various other sounds, for near an hour. Then all was silent, and remained so for another hour. At the end of that time he raised himself upon his elbow and listened, struck his repeater, which gave him half-past one; lay down for about a quarter of an hour more, with his head resting upon his hand, and then started, at hearing sounds again. A muttered curse broke from his lips, and he sat up, endeavouring to distinguish what could be the occupation of the person who was watching, and busy at that "very witching time of night." He could make nothing of it, however, for his ear only caught a low whirring sort of sound, very much like that of a watch running down. He thought he heard some people speaking or whispering also in the court, and rising from his bed

he threw on his dressing-gown, drew back the curtain of his window, and looked out.

It was a bright and beautiful moonlight night as ever was seen. One could almost distinguish the blades of green grass in the turfed court below; but Lieberg could perceive nothing of any human being. He found, indeed, that the penthouse of the large shed, which I have mentioned as disfiguring the front of the building, came nearly up to the window of his room; and he concluded that the noise he heard must proceed from some of the early farm servants, busily at work in those agricultural mysteries which he himself did not understand. By this time, however, the sound had ceased, and another kind of noise suceeeded for a moment, which also came to an end, and then all was quiet.

Silence maintained her reign for about a quarter of an hour, during which time Lieberg gazed out upon a scene which was well calculated to afford high and holy thoughts, had his been a breast to receive them. The beautiful orb, which, like woman's love to man, follows this earthly sphere through all its wandering course, was shining bright and pure, in her highest glory. The green lawn, the dark yew trees, the sloping upland, the well-trimmed hedges, caught the rays as they fell, and deep shadows, like those which must ever fall to the eye of memory over various spots in the past, when we look back from the end of a long life, were cast over the turf from every rising object.

Such, however, were not the thoughts with which Lieberg gazed. We shall not, indeed, attempt to penetrate them; they were deep, inscrutable, and would do no good to the mind of any one. Suffice it, that as his eye strayed upon the dark blue expanse, and seemed shooting back rays to the bright orb above him, a dark shadow came upon his brow, his lip curled, his head was raised higher than before, his chest expanded, as if with some struggle within him. Indeed, it would seem that he heard some warning voice, and succeeded in drowning it in the clamour of pride and passion, for he muttered to himself as he turned from the window—"So hypocrites would tell us, and so fools would yield!"

He left the curtains open, and with a quiet and steady step, walked towards the door. As he did so, however, and as his hand was actually upon the lock to open it, he thought he heard a faint cry, and paused for a moment to listen. "Busy imagination!" he said, finding the sound was not repeated; and he opened the door.

All was dark, but the moonlight, which streamed through his room, crossed the corridor and gave a faint light. There was a sudden step heard in the passage, and Lieberg instantly drew back; but before he could shut the door, or see what was coming, he received a heavy blow upon the head, which struck him to the ground, and for a few minutes deprived him of all thought and feeling. When he opened his eyes, one of the candles on his dressing-table was lighted, and he saw two tall, stout men, covered with smock frocks, each with a large piece of black crape drawn over his face, busily engaged, the one in packing up quietly all his dressing apparatus, at least that part of it which was formed of silver or gold, whilst the other, who had, to say the truth, opened various portmanteaus and carriage-boxes, without their master's privity or consent, was examining a purse and a pocket-book by the light of a candle.

Lieberg was a man of dauntless courage; and though there were two to one against him, yet he strove to rise, trusting to his own powers to enable him to contend successfully with the housebreakers, till he received some assistance. The very first effort to move, however, showed him that his hands were tied tightly behind his back, and his feet linked together, for which purpose two of his own silk handkerchiefs had been employed. As soon as he found that such was the case, he perceived that it was vain to make any effort; and he took his resolution at once, lying as still as if he was dead, and only watching the proceedings of the plunderers, through his half-closed eyes.

After having examined the contents of the pocket-book, the man put it in his pocket, saying to himself, "That will do!" He then proceeded to aid his companion, and their arrangements were very soon made. The larger articles were tied up in a towel; Lieberg's rings, watch, seal, and various other trinkets, were disposed about their persons, and then, shading again a dark lantern which they had brought with them, they approached the door, leaving the candle burning on the table. Lieberg closed his eyes completely, and lay quite still, though his heart burnt within him; and had there been the slightest possibility of success, had he been able to free himself, even in a degree, he would have undoubtedly struggled up, at all risks, rather than remain in a situation which wounded his pride perhaps more than anything that had ever occurred to him in life.

He could hear, as he lay with his eyes shut, however, that the two men stopped beside him; and the one said to the other—

"You've done for him, Harry!"

"No, I haven't!"-exclaimed the other, in a loud, rough tone. "D—n his heart and limbs, I have a great mind to do for him, though! He's only stunned, like—see how he breathes! but if he were up to knowing why I did it, I'd take and thrash him till I drove the soul out of his body. I'll tell you what—this is the fellow that you heard of, who got hold of the poor boy, and threatened to hang him for forgery, if he wouldn't make his sister go into keeping with him. Now, that's what I call being a rascal, indeed. How it happens that what you call gentlemen keep him amongst them, I can't say; but I know if he were to come amongst us, we would kick him out. But come along; if I stand looking at him any longer, I shall do a something that I shall be sorry for. I don't like taking a man's life in that way, unless he stands up to me; so come along, for I feel inclined to put my foot upon him, and tread his dirty soul out, as I would to a toad."

The next moment came the sound of receding steps, and then voices were heard, speaking in another part of the house, and then doors opening and shutting again, and what seemed tones

of lamentation and supplication. Those were followed by the banging-to of a heavy door, and the sound of a key turned in the lock; and then all was still, till what seemed the noise of distant cart-wheels came upon the air, and silence resumed her sway again.

All these sounds Lieberg might have heard, and did hear as far as the external organs were concerned, but his heart was moved with passions far too strong for the mental ear to give heed to anything. Had it been possible for his strong, clear mind to give way, it would have yielded at that instant, when, lying bound and helpless, and forced to counterfeit insensibility, he listened to the comments of a low-born ruffian upon his own base conduct, and felt himself, in spite of all the resistance of vanity, placed in a state of utter degradation both in his own eyes and in those of the two men who had been gazing upon him.

It required nearly an hour for his feelings to become tranquil in any degree, and during that time everything remained quiet in the house, while the calm, sweet dawn of day came gradually on, throwing warmer and warmer tints into the room, till at length all was sunshine. As soon as the day was bright and high, the ear of Lieberg caught the sound of knocking and shaking, as if some persons at the top of the house were locked in a room, and trying to make themselves heard. Then came the voice of his own servant, Martini, exclaiming, with his Italian accent—"Why have you locked me in? Some one let me out! My master ordered me to go for the letters early. Let me out, I say!"

"We can't!" screamed a woman's voice, still further off; "they have locked us in, too."

"They!" exclaimed the voice of Martini, again—"who the devil are they?"

"The men who broke in, and robbed the house, and murdered my master and the strange gentleman—I dare say," screamed the woman, who had spoken before. "Lord have mercy upon us! I saw one of their black faces"—and she plunged into a personal description of the housebreakers, which was certainly borrowed very greatly from imagination, although she had preserved judgment enough, as she said, to lie still, pretending to be asleep, and do nothing but shiver while the men were in the room.

At length, the notes of some early countryman, whistling gaily as he went to his labour, caught Lieberg's ear, and he now raised his voice, calling to his servant as loud as it was possible; and bidding him holla out of the window, and tell the man to break open the doors. Fortunately, Martini's ears were quick, and he heard and distinguished his master's orders. The window was thrown open, and several loud shouts soon brought the countryman, who was passing along the road, into the green court, and under Martini's window.

"What is the matter, master?" he cried. "What do you want? It seems Master Carr has got you there in a cage, that you are chirping out so early in the morning."

"I want to be let out," exclaimed Martini. "Break open the doors, and let me out."

"No, no," said the man, "that won't do. We never meddle with any of Master Carr's birds. He's a queer hand to deal with, and so I'll let him alone."

He was actually stalking off, when the head of the cook popped out of another window, and she exclaimed—"Master Turnbull—Master Turnbull! break open the door, there's a dear heart! There have been robbers and murderers in the house last night; and I don't doubt you'll find master, with his throat cut, down-stairs. Do break open the door, there's a good soul, and let us out, for we are all locked in together; though by the blessing of God we are all alive!"

"I'll go and get somebody to help me," said the man, with a knowing look—"the fellows may be there still. It would take them some time to break open old Carr's strong box, I take it. No one ever got in there easily. I'll go and get help—you wait there till I come."

The poor cook had no choice except that of doing so, or throwing herself down upon the top of the penthouse, and probably breaking her legs; and the man began to walk away, with as slow a step as if he had been following the plough. Fortune, however, decided that their state of durance should not continue much longer; for no sooner had Master Turnbull issued forth into the road again, than his eyes lighted upon two labourers, coming leisurely up towards him. With their aid and assistance he now determined to encounter all the powers of darkness which might be found in Mr. Carr's house, and approached with a steady purpose of breaking open the door, and restoring egress and regress to the inhabitants. All violent proceedings, however, were spared him; for, on coming nearer, he found that one of the windows, under the shed which we have before mentioned, was wide open, a large hole having been cut in the window shutter with a saw, and the sash having been raised quietly by a hand introduced through the aperture.

One of the labourers made his way in by this entrance; but in the mean time, Master Turnbull had been examining the door, and discovered that, though it was locked, the key was on the outside. This he turned, and, accompanied by the other peasant, entered by the ordinary passage. The first thing that the three deliverers did, was to proceed together to that part of the house from which they had heard articulate sounds; and the door of the maid's room, as well as that of the valet, was opened. Forth from their several apartments issued the male tenant, in haste to set his master free—the cook, all alive to look after her old gentleman, as she called him—and the housemaid, still rubbing her eyes.

The countrymen followed as quick as it was in their nature, upon the steps of Martini, to Count Lieberg's room, and arrived in time to see the valet raise his master from the floor, and place him in a chair. The floor of the room displayed a good deal of blood, which had flowed from Lieberg's head, and Master Turnbull exclaimed—"Lackadaisy, that is a bad cut!"

"Off my hands, off my hands, first!" exclaimed Lieberg, as Martini was endeavouring to untie the tight knot round his ankles. "Cut it, cut

it! What matters the price of a handkerchief, in comparison with this torture?"

The man took a knife from his pocket, and, solving these Gordian knots in the Alexandrine fashion, set his master at liberty.

"Now, my men," cried Lieberg, "where can my servant find a magistrate?"

"Oh, there's a magistrate at Bingley, master," replied Turnbull; "but you can't get a surgeon nearer than Doncaster."

"Never mind a surgeon," said Lieberg; "for me at least. What has become of Mr. Carr and Miss Barham?"

"That we can't tell," replied one of the peasants; "the maids are gone to see after them."

"Let us go too; though," replied Lieberg, "they would not hurt the lady, and I do not think, from what they said, that they have killed the old man. But let us go and see—some one had better run for a magistrate immediately. These fellows must be pursued at once."

As Lieberg spoke, he rose from the chair in which he had been placed; but for some moments he could scarcely stand, and, motioning the rest to leave him, he said—"Go quick, go quick! I must put on some more clothes. Go with them, Martini, and bring me intelligence as soon as may be."

The man obeyed at once, and Lieberg proceeded to dress himself, as quickly as possible, though it was but slowly after all—for both his arms and feet were cramped and swollen, from the tightness of the ligatures which had bound them. As he proceeded, he paused two or three times in thought, and once struck his hand vehemently upon the dressing-table, saying,—"Curses upon them!—Well, well, Martini," he exclaimed, as the man entered the room; "what have you found?—what has happened?"

There was a grin upon the man's countenance which assured Lieberg that no life had been lost; and the Italian replied—"We found the old man, sir, tied naked to the bed-post, cold, shivering, and miserable enough, but he has contrived to warm himself since, for never did I see a man in such a fury about his money and his plate. They have cleared the whole house out, that is certain, and got some seven thousand pounds, the old man says."

"They have got five or six hundred from me," said Lieberg. "But what of Miss Barham?"

"Oh, she is very well, sir, I suppose," said the man, with a peculiar expression of countenance. "I met her maid just now going to her room, and she did not say that her mistress had been disturbed at all. The truth is, sir," he added, approaching close to Lieberg, and speaking in a low tone, "I did hear some noise in the night, but I did not know what it might be, and thought it better to keep quiet, and take no notice."

Lieberg shut his teeth hard, and clenched his hand with a frowning brow; but he made no reply, and having dressed himself as far as was necessary, issued forth and proceeded to the room of Mr. Carr. That gentleman was coming out, with nothing but his stockings, breeches, and a grey dressing-gown on; and grasping Lieberg's arm, he dragged him on towards the drawing-room, saying, "They have robbed me—they have plundered me—they have ruined me, sir!"

Now there was nothing on earth that excited Lieberg's scorn and hatred so much as to see a human being give way to passion or emotion, simply because he had great powers of concealing his own; and the agony of Mr. Carr, on account of his loss, only served to curl his companion's lip with a contemptuous smile, and render all his movements, as if for the contrast's sake, as cool, as self-possessed as possible.

While the old man, then, walked about the room in a state of half-frenzied agitation, Lieberg calmly approached the table, and after looking at him for a moment, with a cold, sneering gaze, he opened quietly the leaves of Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, and began to turn over the engravings.

"Do you know, Mr. Carr," he said, in the tone of a connoisseur, "I think they have made a very great mistake in representing Apollyon as so fearfully ugly. Surely, if that good gentleman, who tempts us all, be so frightful as he is here put down, we sinners must be men of good stomachs to run after his sweet things so greedily."

Mr. Carr thought him perfectly insane; but Lieberg went on in the same spirit—"He should be rendered very beautiful and attractive, powerful certainly, and well armed, but still very charming; for we all of us paint our own particular fiend as a pleasant, sweet personage. Now you, for instance, never represent to yourself Mammon with horns and a tail, and all this paraphernalia of episodical horrors, fangs, and hoofs, and claws, and all that sort of a thing. I dare say, in your eyes, he is a sweet little cherub, with a purse in his hand, as I paint Asteroth to myself as a beautiful woman."

The miser gazed at him as if he had suddenly found himself in the presence of a furious madman, and he exclaimed, vehemently, in the first excitement of passion, "Why I believe that you are Satan himself! Is it not enough to drive me mad, to have lost seven thousand pounds in one night, without having a stranger insulting me in my own drawing-room, talking of Asteroth, and Mammon, and Apollyon, and all the follies that ever were concocted in the brain of that half-drunken idiot, John Bunyan?—Was it you that robbed me?—How should I know that it was not?—I never saw you before—you may have had a hand in it for aught I know!"

"It is very probable," answered Lieberg, "especially as there has been another robbery committed in your house that you are not aware of, and that to a large amount."

Mr. Carr instantly ran to a little old oak cabinet, and shook the door to see if it had been opened. All was safe, however, and he exclaimed, "Where?—how?—in what room?"

"In my room"—answered Lieberg; "that is to say, in the room where I slept last night; and where, if I robbed you as you say, I committed the folly of robbing myself also, to the amount of some six or seven hundred pounds. It seems to me, Mr. Carr," he continued, in a quicker but less ironical tone, "that this loss of yours has made you mad, and that instead of thinking of

recovering your property by pursuing these men at once, with all the activity in your nature, you are, instead, raving like an insane person. Why don't you saddle every horse in your stable, and track the wheels of the cart in which they carried off your goods and mine? I have already sent for a magistrate, and no time ought to be lost in taking other measures."

"True—very true, Count!" said Mr. Carr, who, now that the first burst of passion had passed, was coming to his senses again, and recollected that it would not do to offend a guest, who was likely to hire his manors—"I will send out some men directly. I beg your pardon, sir, for being so violent, but this is a great loss.—We must despatch people to the village, too, and after we have taken all sorts of measures, we can just go over the manors together. But, dear me, what shall I do about going to town with Miss Barham?—Hark!—what is that? There is somebody calling me—they do not know where to find us. Perhaps they have found some of the plate. It was very heavy, and the men may have thrown it away. Here I am—here I am!" he continued, putting his head out of the drawing-room door. "What do you want with me? Have you found anything?"

"No, sir, no!" exclaimed the cook, running up with eager eyes. "We have not found anything, but what is worse than finding anything in this world, we can't find the young lady—we can't find Miss Barham!"

"God of Heaven!" exclaimed Lieberg, starting forward. "Can't find her? Are there any signs of violence?"

"Oh, dear! Lord bless you, sir! they have murdered her!" exclaimed the cook, with her eyes as big as saucers, while the housemaid gaped behind, and Helen's maid appeared with the tears on her cheeks. "They have murdered her, and taken away the body to bury it, like a dead dog, in some field. I'll wager any money she saw them and screamed, and they cut her throat. They would have cut mine, too, if I had screamed, but I knew better."

"I declare I heard her scream in the night!" cried the housemaid; "but I thought it was only a screech-owl."

"Get along, you fool," said the cook, in reply, "you heard nothing at all, not even yourself snoring."

"Let me pass!" said Lieberg, with his face as pale as death. "This must be seen to at once."

He was confronted, however, by Helen's maid, who said, wiping the tears from her eyes—"I don't think they have murdered my young lady, sir, for the shoes and the gown that she wore last night are gone, though everything else is left, even the combs for her hair. I think she must have seen them, too, and they must have made her go away with them for fear she should tell."

"Come with me—come with me!" cried Lieberg, and away he rushed to the room where Helen had inhabited. He found everything as the girl had described. There were no signs of any violence, but evident proof that Miss Barham had quitted the place suddenly, and but half-dressed. Nothing seemed to have been plundered, however; two rings which she had worn were on the dressing-table; and the picture of her grandfather, which she had spoken of to Mr. Carr on the preceding evening, lay beside them, having been apparently taken out of the lower part of a small dressing-case, on which was inscribed—"To Helen Barham, from her affectionate Father." Her drawing-box was also on the table, and beside it, a sketch which she had been drawing. Signs of her mind were in everything about the room, and Lieberg gazed around it with sensations such as he had never experienced before. He felt that, for the first time, he loved—passionately, strongly; and when he thought of the fair being who had so lately tenanted that chamber—whose spirit seemed to live in every object round him—of her grace, her loveliness, her bright mind, her glowing heart; of his own evil designs against her, and of her uncertain fate, of her being cast into the hands of ruffians, and left entirely to their will and disposal, he struck his hand against his brow, and then shook it wildly in the air.

The moment after he had done so, his eye rested upon the form of Mr. Carr, standing before him, with a bitter sneer upon his countenance.

"And so," said the old man, evidently finding his revenge in Lieberg's agitation, "Mammon is a sweet little cherub—a sweet little cherub, with a purse in his hand; and Asteroth is a beautiful lady! Well, Count, you see, we have all our weaknesses, and I agree with you perfectly that we should paint Apollyon good-looking, though powerful. I do not know that you might not sit for the picture yourself."

"I will give five guineas to any man," exclaimed Lieberg, "who brings me a saddle-horse to the door in half-an-hour."

"I will—I will!" said Mr. Carr, "and give you credit for the sum, Count, for I believe they have taken your purse as well as mine."

"I have more that they did not find," answered Lieberg, abruptly. "Quick with the horse then, sir! Every minute is precious. Let my servant, when he returns, wait for me here. If I should not come till to-morrow, let him have his food, Mr. Carr! You shall be paid. I know the principles of your proceedings. Quick with the horse, I say!"

In less than a quarter of an hour the horse was brought round, and Lieberg was upon its back. He tracked the marks of wheels for a long way with the skill of a wild Indian, but at length they entered upon a high road where they were lost amongst other traces. Lieberg chose his direction after a moment's consideration, and then galloped on till he came to a large town.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A BENEVOLENT BURGLAR.

It is not in the least my intention to keep the reader in suspense regarding the fate of Helen Barham, or, indeed, of any of the other personages in this book. We will, therefore, at once, with good leave and permission, return, in point

of time, to the night preceding the attack upon Mr. Carr's house, and venture, in our ghostly capacity, into the bed-chamber of sweet Helen Barham.

She was certainly as fair a being as ever was seen, and the great test of loveliness, which the poet gave in his few masterly words, proved hers—that ornament made no addition to her charms; that dress added nothing, but rather took away, and that her beauty was assuredly, "when unadorned, adorned the most." She was indeed so lovely that eyes, not in general accustomed to contemplate or appreciate very great refinement, admired as much as those which fed upon rare flowers every day; and the girl whom Helen had brought from London with her, was almost as much her lover as if she had been a man.

Helen's toilet for the night, though always careful, was not long; and, it must be repeated, that in her bed-gown she was not a bit less lovely than in the richest robe that ever came from the hands of a Parisian artist. She had approached the side of her bed, to kneel down and pray to that God who had mingled most unexpected mercies with his chastisements, whom she had never forgotten in her misfortunes, and who had saved her from temptation to sin. She was about to kneel, then, when her maid, whom she had dismissed for the night some time before, re-entered the room, and said—"A little note from Count Lieberg, Miss Helen."

Helen turned round, perhaps somewhat impatiently, for her thoughts were full of other things—full of all the wants and wishes which she was about to express to the ear of God; and she asked, "What is it, Mary?—open it, and read it."

The girl obeyed, and taking the note to the light, read aloud the words which the reader has already heard. Helen returned to the table, and wrote her hasty reply beneath; and then dismissing the maid, knelt down and prayed. Amongst other petitions was the request that God would pardon, reform, and bless her brother; and her thoughts naturally ran on, after she had done, to his future fate, and to the hopes of fortune which Mr. Carr had held out. She could not help thinking that his having been prevented from proceeding on his voyage just at the time that such a discovery was likely to take place, seemed like an interposition of Providence. Such a train of thought induced her to take out of the lower part of her dressing-case the picture of her grandfather, and compare it with that of her father, which had belonged originally to her mother, and which, since her mother's death, she had constantly worn round her neck, night and day. The latter portrait was an extremely small miniature in a gold case, surrounded by small brilliants; but it had been painted for her father in the times of his happiness and prosperity, by an artist who has not long been dead, but whose works are of high value still to all who possess them, and who was known in his own day by the name of Gentleman Shelley. His skilful hand had preserved the likeness in a size scarcely greater than that of a large ring, and in comparing the two pictures, the resemblance between the father and the son was extraordinary.

Helen gazed on them for several minutes; her memory ran back to the past, and to the last looks of that father who had been taken from her at an hour when a father's care was most needful. No one can wonder that her eyes filled with tears; but feeling that it was in vain to indulge such sorrow, she extinguished the light and retired to bed, with her own heart free from guile, though crime, in various shapes, was hovering round—crime of one kind destined, by the wisdom and mercy of God, to disappoint another.

She lay awake for some time, for from the bosom of Helen Barham had gone for ever that balmy peace which sheds the downy blessing on the eyes of childhood. Passion, the scarer of slumber, had taken possession of her bosom, and the lids that not a year before used to drop at the first invitation of repose, now refused to shut out busy waking thought from the troubled brain. At length, however, weariness overcame her, and after a deep-drawn sigh, she fell into profound sleep.

How long it lasted she knew not, but when she woke, it was with a start. There was a light in the room which dazzled her eyes, and to her horror and consternation she beheld three men, dressed as we have described those who entered Lieberg's chamber, except that one had for the moment withdrawn the crape from his face, and was drinking a draught of cold water from a tumbler which she had left upon the table. All three were standing near the dressing-glass, and one was examining some of the little trinkets which she had laid down. Although they all seemed so peaceably disposed, Helen could not restrain the first impulse of terror, and uttered a scream, though it was rendered a faint one by an effort to repress it. The man whose face was uncovered, instantly drew the crape over it again, and darted towards her bedside with a crow-bar in his hand, exclaiming—"By —— she has seen me!"

Helen, overpowered by terror, could not utter a word, but clasped her hands in an attitude of supplication. She was so young, so beautiful, there was so much of the light and spirit of life about her, that it must have been a heart of stone indeed that could have struck her, as she there lay, in her innocence and her loveliness. The man paused suddenly, repeating—"She has seen me!" and then asked in a harsh and grating tone, "Did you not see me?"

Even then Helen would not tell a falsehood, and she murmured forth, "I did; but I will never, never say a word of it to any one."

The man continued gazing at her for a minute or more, in perfect silence, and then thrust the end of the crow-bar into his pocket, saying, "It's no use!—I can't do it! Look ye, my young lady, I know ye, your name is Barham—I have seen you with your brother. Now if I spare your life, and you help to take mine, d—me if you're not a great deal worse than I am."

"I will never say one word against you, so help me Heaven!" exclaimed Helen.

At that moment one of the man's companions pulled him by the sleeve, and they had a quick

whispering conference together at the other side of the room.

"Very well," said the man who had approached her bedside, "that will do. You stay here at her door, on the outside, d'ye see, while Simes and I go to the other room.—Don't you do her any harm, mind ye, for I won't have her hurt. I know she's a good girl.—Come, ma'am, you must get up, and put on some things, and go with us. They don't choose to leave ye here. So now be quick. Don't be afraid; no harm shall happen to ye. I give you my honour I'll take care of ye, and nobody shall lay a finger on ye. If they do, I'll take care of them—that's all. Get up quick, there's a good girl," he added, in a softer tone, and all three left the room.

Astonished, surprised — scarcely knowing whether she was dead or alive—Helen lay for a moment ere she proceeded to execute the commands she had received. She then rose, though it was with terror and agitation, which scarcely left her power to dress herself, so terribly did her hands tremble and her knees shake under her. Her dress was still in sad disarray, when the man who was watching on the outside put his head in, exclaiming, "Be quick—be quick! —we can't stay here all night. They'll soon have done."

But, as may well be supposed, his exhortations to speed only tended to agitate Helen more, and take from her the power of making haste. A minute after, another man appeared, who, by his voice, she recognized as the man whose face she had seen. "Come, come!" he exclaimed, "you must be quick."

She would fain have supplicated to be allowed to remain, but he caught her sharply by the hand, and led her along, saying, "Not a word, as you value your life."

With these words he led her down-stairs, through the passages at the bottom of the house, and to the door leading out into the court. Another man who preceded them, darted away towards a room, which she knew to be Mr. Carr's, and returned in a minute, bearing a large and heavy load, and followed by a third similarly burdened. A fourth carried another large package, and as soon as they were all collected in the hall, they opened the door and issued forth, one of them pausing for a moment to lock the door behind them. Poor Helen, still grasped by the arm, was hurried along through the grass court, and down the road, which passed before the house, to a spot about a hundred yards distance, where they found a double-bodied phaeton, and two knavish-looking horses, which apparently had come some distance that morning. These animals had their forelegs tightly tied with handkerchiefs, so as to prevent them from moving; but the bandages being speedily taken off, the packages, which the men had brought, were placed in various parts of the carriage, and Helen, in a state scarcely to be described, was lifted into the vehicle.

The man who had hitherto shown her some kindness, now took his place by her side, seized the reins with an experienced hand, and drove on, as fast as the horses would go, for the space of nearly two hours, only stopping for one single minute to let the poor animals breathe at the top of a hill. He showed no hesitation as to which way he should turn, though one of the men—of whom there were three, crowded into the second body of the carriage—called out from time to time, "To the right, Harry—to the left!" as they approached any lane or road, up which it was necessary to go.

It seemed to Helen from the way in which they turned and returned, that they were making more than one circuit, in order to evade pursuit; and such indeed was the case, for the spot which they at length reached was not, in a direct line, more than sixteen miles from Yelverley, and the round they had taken must have been at least twenty-four. Instead of slackening their pace, they quickened it towards the end of the journey, and entered a large smoky-looking town, just as the darkness of the night was beginning to turn grey with the light of the morning. There was nobody stirring in the streets, and they did not drive far into the town, stopping at a small public-house on the left hand, almost immediately after they had entered. All was darkness in the aspect of the dwelling, but one of the men springing down, opened the door without knocking, and Helen was lifted out, by another, and taken into a small parlour, where she found a rushlight on the table, the faint twinkling of which showed her, that the people who were with her had not yet taken the crape from off their faces. One of the two who had got out of the phaeton stayed in the room with her, without saying a word, while the other ran out, and returned with a candle, which he lighted at the rushlight; and then both quitted the parlour, leaving Helen alone, and locking the door upon her.

Nearly half-an-hour passed without any one returning, and the poor girl remained shivering with terror, and with a sensation of cold all over her; although it was in the midst of summer, and the morning was in reality warm. No sounds stirred in the house—nothing gave any indication of its being inhabited; but at length the door was again opened, and a man appeared, in whom, though the crape was gone, and the smock-frock was thrown off, Helen recognized without difficulty the man whose face she had seen in her room at Yelverly. He was a handsome, powerful, active-looking man, with a frank and bold, but somewhat stern countenance; and though his brow was frowning when he entered, yet, to say the truth, Helen felt more security in his presence, than probably she might have done in that of any of his companions.

She had been sitting upon a wooden chair, with her head resting upon her hands, but she started up as soon as the man entered, and gazed upon him as if inquiring her fate. The expression of apprehension upon her face seemed to move him, and his first words were—"Don't be afraid, young lady; I told you nobody should do you any harm, and they shan't: so make your mind at ease on that score.—You can hurt nobody but me, and I'll take my chance."

"On my word," cried Helen—"on my honour, I will never say anything to injure you."

"Well, well, I believe you," he said; "and

if you did think of peaching, I don't fancy you will when I give you what I've got in my hand. Look here, Miss Barham; you know your brother's a d—d fool.—There, that paper might have hanged him—ay, and it was kept for the purpose of hanging him, too, by that bitter bad scamp, Lieberg, if he did not do what was wrong by you. So there, now, take it, and do what you like with it:" and he held out towards her the very bill that her brother had forged.

"Oh, no, no!" cried Helen, drawing back; "I do not know what to do with it."

"Not know what to do with it!" cried the man; "why, you foolish girl, I'll show you then;"—and twisting it up in his fingers, he put it to the light. In a moment it blazed up, and the chief record of William Barham's guilt was at an end. Though Helen dared not do that act herself, yet her heart beat gladly when she saw it done, and starting forward with one of her wild impulses of gratitude, she caught the man's hand, and pressed it to her lips.

"Nonsense, nonsense!—don't do that," he cried, actually colouring with a feeling of shame. "Look here! here's another paper I got out of that same pocket-book—a sort of confession that he made your brother sign, all for the sake of getting hold of you—I can't well wonder at it, after all. But then he should have gone honourably about it, and asked you yourself. However, we will serve this the same," and he set fire to it likewise, and threw it into the empty grate. "And now," continued he, "you're to stay here for an hour more, Miss Helen! After that, you may go where you please—back again if you like; but take my advice, and have nothing to do with that d—d rascal, Lieberg, for he's as bad a one as ever lived. He would have made your brother sell you, like a sheep, to save his neck; and that's not the way to get a woman's love, I'm sure."

"But how can I get back?" said Helen; "how can I get home?"

"Oh! easy enough," replied the man; "you have nothing to do, but to turn to the left out of the door, and walk straight up the street, till you come to the Tontine Inn, and the coach-office; and so now remember, that whenever you see me again, you're not to know me from Adam."

"I have promised you most sincerely," said Helen, "and on my word I will keep that promise—you need not be in the least afraid."

"I am not—I am not," said the man; "there, give us your hand upon it. Stay here for an hour, and then go where you like."

Thus saying, he shook her hand heartily, and was turning to depart, but Helen stopped him, saying, timidly, "But am I safe here?"

"Perfectly," replied the man—"perfectly! Why bless your little heart, there's nobody in the house but yourself."

"But if the people to whom it belongs should come?" said Helen, "they may think——"

"Well, tell them how you were brought here," said the man; "in an hour you may say anything you please;" and he added, "we shall be far on the road into Scotland by that time, so don't forget your word, and good-bye!"

Thus speaking, he quitted the room, and Helen stood watching the light, as it burnt slowly down in the candlestick.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A VILLAIN DEFEATED

In an hour after the period at which we closed the last chapter, Helen Barham stood before a house, bearing the name of the Tontine Inn, in the town of Sheffield. It was now broad daylight, and there were a many artisans and people of the lower classes going about the streets on their various employments; but yet very few of the houses and shops that she had passed were open, it being barely half-past five o'clock in the morning. About the inn itself there was no appearance of wakefulness, and the coach-office was not to be seen.

Poor Helen Barham's heart sunk as she gazed up at the closed shutters and blank face of the tall house. She knew not where to go, or what to do; and had she recollected that her appearance at that moment was certainly somewhat wild and strange—her hair dishevelled, her bonnet scarcely tied, without shawl or handkerchief, or gloves—she might have felt still more abashed and apprehensive than she did.

After pausing for several minutes, Helen wandered some way on, and then came back again, when, to her great satisfaction, she saw one of the drudging housemaids of the establishment sweeping out the passage. Helen approached her timidly, and asked which was the coach-office.

"Why, bless you, miss!" replied the girl, "it won't be open these two hours; those lazy fellows are never in it much before eight o'clock. The early coach started an hour ago and more; and then Mr. Jones, who is the night-clerk, goes away, and it's long enough before the others come."

"This is very unfortunate!" said Helen, "for I wanted to go to Yelverly as fast as possible."

"There's no coach, ma'am," answered the girl, "till ten o'clock. But hadn't you better step into the waiting-room, and remain there? What coach did you come by?"

"I came by none," replied Helen; "I was brought here from Yelverly against my will, and want to get back, as soon as possible, to Mr. Carr's."

"Oh, what miser Carr's house!" said the girl. "I know that very well, for I was born at Bingley; and I know Miss Juliet very well, too, for she was kind to my poor dear mother before she died."

"She is a very dear and good friend of mine," answered Helen; "and I have been staying at Mr. Carr's for some time: but a party of men brought me away by force this morning."

The girl's wonder and compassion were both moved by Helen's short account of herself; and after a moment's thought, she said—"Maybe, you would not like to go into the waiting-room, where everybody can come in. Hadn't I better show you into a private room, miss? Some of the waiters will be up soon, and then you can get some breakfast."

Helen very willingly agreed to this proposal, and by the maid's assistance she was, in the space of half-an-hour, not only seated in a comfortable room in the inn, but had before her such tea and toast as the place could afford, and all that constitutes the inn idea of a breakfast. It must not be supposed that Helen forgot her purse had been left behind her, and that she had no money with her; but she had busily turned in her own thoughts the situation in which she was placed, and had made up her mind as to the course she was to pursue, in order to pay both for her accommodation at the inn, and her place back to Yelverly.

The personage who attended upon the room where she sat, who brought her breakfast, and took away the things when she had done, could not exactly be called a dumb waiter, because he possessed at least two words, which were—"Yes, ma'am!" and once even, in a fit of Laputan abstraction, he replied to a question from Helen—"Yes, sir!"—though, bless her, she looked as little like a gentleman as it is possible to conceive. From this personage, it may be easily supposed, Helen could get but very little information of any kind, either respecting the starting of the stages, or aught else; and, after having waited till she heard, by the chime of the clock, that the hour of the coach's departure would be the next that struck, she rang the bell, and asked the waiter if she could speak with the mistress of the house?

The waiter replied—"Yes, ma'am"—perhaps with the intention of informing his mistress; but by this time, as I have hinted, it was nine o'clock: people were coming and going; much gossiping was taking place at the door of the house; bells were ringing, and a variety of calls, objurgations, screams, applications, and scoldings, were flying about the chambers and passages, fit to deafen the ears or distract the brain of any personage but Figaro or the waiter of an inn.

The consequence was, that, after waiting for about a quarter of an hour more, Helen again rang the bell, made the same demand, and received the same reply. "Pray do not fail," she added, in a gentle tone; and the man hastened away, determined to obey her behest, before he did anything else. In a minute after, a tall, fine-looking, stately dame, dressed in black silk, with an apron and cap as white as snow, notwithstanding the manifold globules of soot that float about in the air of Sheffield, entered the room, and asked the young lady, what was her pleasure, surveying her, at the same time, from head to foot, with some degree of curiosity.

Helen, by this time, had indeed done something at the looking-glass, to take away the wildness of her appearance; but still she was conscious of not being dressed with that care which becomes a lady, and her situation altogether gave a timidity to her tone, as she replied—"I wished, madam, to ask a favour of you. The case is, simply, this: I have been spending some time at Mr. Carr's, at Yeverly; but I was brought away from that place last night by four men, perfect strangers to me, and against my will. All my money was left behind——"

The landlady uttered an ominous "Oh!" and pursed up her lips, with a very significant expression of countenance. But Helen hastened on to the principal point of her story, saying—"I desire to get back again to Yelverly, as fast as possible, and I have no means of doing so, but——"

"I never lend money to nobody, ma'am," said the landlady, tossing her head; "and I always expect people to pay for their breakfast when they order it." And as she thus spoke, she took a step towards the door, as if to consult with her excellent spouse upon ulterior proceedings. But Helen was made a little angry at the worthy lady's sharp selfishness; and she replied, in a tone of more firmness and command—

"Stop a minute, madam, and be so good as to hear me out, before you come to such rapid conclusions. I do not expect you to lend me money, or to trust me in any way, without some certainty of being paid. I have, luckily, one thing with me, which—though I have never parted with it for an hour, from the time I first had it till the present day—I must now give up for a time, till I can get to Yelverly, and send the money to you."

As she spoke, she unclasped the little gold chain that suspended her father's picture around her neck, and looked at the miniature for a moment, with a glistening eye. "This picture, madam," she continued, "is set in gold—those are brilliants round it, of no great value it is true, but more than enough to make you quite sure that you will not lose by trusting me with whatever may be the amount of my bill here, and with a sufficient sum to carry me to Yelverly. You will be good enough to give me a little memorandum of having received the picture; and as soon as I arrive at Mr. Carr's house, I will send back the money to redeem it."

The landlady's manner was altered in an extraordinary degree, as she looked at the miniature, and saw that it was set round with a row of small diamonds, intrinsically worth, perhaps, seven or eight guineas. "I will speak to my husband, ma'am," she said. "Indeed, I did not mean to say anything——"

Helen bowed her head gently, replying—"There is no need of any apology. It is very natural that you should not trust a mere stranger. Speak to your husband by all means; show him the picture, and tell him what I say. Indeed, if he likes to send some one with me to Yelverly, I shall greatly prefer it. Then he can have the money at once, and I will pay his messenger."

"Oh dear, no, ma'am, there's no occasion for that, I'm sure," cried the landlady; "he'll be quite satisfied, I'm certain. I'll be back in a minute, ma'am," and away she went to tell her husband all about the nice young lady in No. 5, whom ten minutes before she had set down for a swindler and a reprobate.

When she came into the bar, however, she found her husband speaking busily with a gentleman whose whole attire was dusty, as if from long travelling.

"No, sir, no," said the landlord; "I have heard nothing of the kind—Lord have mercy! you had better go to the magistrates. What do

you think, my dear? They have broken into Mr. Carr's house, at Yelverly, and carried off everything out of the place."

"Then I'll bet any money," cried the landlady, "that this here picture is a part of the stolen goods.—But no, that can't be it, neither; for the young lady wants to go back again."

"What young lady?—What picture?" cried Lieberg eagerly, for he it was. "Let me look at it!"

"Why, sir," rejoined the landlady, handing it to him, "the young lady says she was carried away by force by four men against her will. To say the truth, I did not believe it at first——"

"Then you were a fool for your pains!" thundered Lieberg. "It is Miss Barham! Where is she? Poor girl, what she must have suffered!" and Lieberg, who without scruple would have wrung her heart, and condemned her to a life of regret and remorse, did, nevertheless, feel sincere compassion for Helen Barham under sufferings not a thousandth part so intense.

The landlady, however, who did not at all like being called a fool in the presence of her husband and her waiter, determined to stand up for Helen Barham's dignity, now that she was thoroughly convinced that the young lady was what she professed to be; and to Lieberg's repeated question of "Where is she?" she replied, "I must first ask the lady, sir, whether she desires to see you. What name shall I tell her?"

"Colonel Lieberg," he exclaimed, sharply. "But, as there is no doubt about her seeing me, I shall accompany you."

The landlady led the way to No. 5, and opened the door sufficiently wide to admit her own portly person, but not to let Lieberg pass, saying, at the same time, "Madam, if your name is Miss Barham, here is a gentleman, who calls himself Colonel Lieberg, wishing to see you."

In an instant the warnings of the housebreaker came back to Helen's recollection, but more powerfully still the words of Morley Ernstein. Her countenance spoke at once plainly that her visitor was not one whom she most eagerly desired to see, but, ere she could reply, Lieberg pushed the door impetuously out of the landlady's hand, and, passing by her, advanced at once towards Helen.

"Dear Miss Barham," he cried—"we have almost been in despair about you. This is, indeed, joyful to have found you so soon. I have been galloping about the country these last three hours in search of you."

There was so much real joy and satisfaction in his whole look, that Helen could not refuse to give him her hand; and the landlady having shut the door, Lieberg, in the excitement of the moment, pressed his lips upon it, resolved to hazard everything at what he believed to be a favourable opportunity.

Helen would have drawn away her hand instantly, but he held it firmly, and led her to her seat, saying—"Oh, Helen, what have I suffered on your account this night!"

Helen coloured and trembled, feeling that a moment of trial was approaching. She replied gravely, however—"I am extremely sorry that you should have been put to any pain on my account; but as the stage will soon be departing for Yelverly, I must settle with the people here, and take my place."

"Nay, nay, Helen," said Lieberg, "you must first listen to me for a moment."

Helen turned very pale; but he continued, eagerly, though in that bland, persuasive tone which he knew well how to use, his voice assuming the softest modulations, his brow cleared of everything that was stern and dark, his magnificent features glowing with animation, but full of gentleness and entreaty, his eyes beaming like stars in a dark night, but with a subdued and gentle light.

"Helen," he said, "dear Helen, you must know, you cannot but know, since last night, that I love you; deeply, passionately, tenderly; with an ardour, strength, a profoundness that I never felt before towards any woman. I know not what it is, or how, but you have fascinated me—enchanted me. That song which you sang last night seemed to waken in my heart feelings that had slept for years—those early dreams of love and ecstatic joy with one adored being, separate from all the rest of earth, bound to her by none of the cold worldly ties that unite the dull earthly insects which crawl about the world and call themselves society, but united to her by the bond of strong affection—of passion, powerful, overpowering, everlasting, indestructible—of passion, neither to be changed by the world's cold maxims, nor restrained by idle ceremonies or empty laws. Oh, Helen, listen to me! Turn not away your head—let not your cheek grow pale as if you thought I wished to deceive or to wrong you, for I am yours altogether, and you shall dictate anything to me that you please. You shall command me in all respects; I will be your slave, the creature of your will. I, who never bowed my head to human being—who never found any to resist or to control me—I will take my law from your lips, and do in all things as you would have me!—Only, only, do one thing. There are circumstances which I cannot explain now, for want of time, but which shall be entirely made clear to you as we go. Only, I beseech you, let me order horses, and go with me at once to London and to your brother. I would fain have you, too, go on with me to the Continent; but you shall stay in London if it please you better. All I have is at your command, myself, my fortune, my life itself; and you shall always dictate to me everything that you would have done, and it shall be done at once. Helen, dear Helen, come with me! True passion bears no cold delay, and a rapid resolution, taken in a moment like this, when love speaks out, when opportunity presents itself and there is nothing to oppose, often goes on to happiness the most intense, the most durable, when, if we lose the instant, we give ourselves up to grief for our whole lives. Nay, shrink not from my arms, beloved—for once let me clasp you to a bosom that burns for you alone."

Helen did shrink from him, however, farther and farther, as with increasing energy and

vehemence, with his eyes lighting up, his words rushing rapidly from his lips in a thousand varied intonations, and his whole spirit moved by the strong feelings within him, he poured forth his passionate solicitations. She shrunk from him, I say, farther and farther, with the small, finely-cut ear glowing with the scarlet blood, her cheek as pale as death, her lip quivering, her eye fixed upon her suitor, in terror, surprise, and horror. She could hardly speak. But however Lieberg veiled his purposes under vague, though glowing language, warned as she had been, she understood him only too well, and saw that all which had been told her was true.

Her lips moved for a moment without uttering a sound, but at length she murmured, "Monster!" —and turned to ring the bell.

Lieberg, however, caught her hand and stopped her, and she stood gazing at him with such a look of horror and pain as, in the moment of the great temptation, the mother of mankind might have worn, had some angel whispered the real nature of the being to whom she listened, and displayed to her mind's eye the endless misery, through unnumbered generations, that was to follow on man's fall.

"Beware!" said Lieberg, at length, as he marked that look and read it aright; and his tongue, while he spoke, lost its poisonous melody, his face its fascinating smile—"beware what you do! Remember, Helen Barham, that you are in my power. The moment is now before you to choose between my love and my hate. Be mine, and I swear by all that I hold sacred, such a life of joy and love shall be yours as even your fancy could never dream; but if you reject all that I offer, recollect that your brother's fate is in my hands, his life, his shame, ay—and your own fate, too—that reputation of which you may be idly vain. Disappoint me now, and men shall laugh, and say that she was Count Lieberg's paramour; but that he tired of her, and cast her off in a single day. Your fate, I say, as well as his, is in my hands."

"Mine, mine!" cried Helen, with astonishment and terror. "Mine in your hands? What is it that you mean?"

"Nay, nay," said Lieberg, softening his tone again, "though what I say is true, think not of it. I meant but to show you what was in my power, Helen. I have not thought of using that power. To wring or pain your heart would pain my own, dear girl. Forgive me for what I have said—think that it was but the mad vehemence of passion. Oh, feel for me, Helen! —you that seem made for love and joy, feel for the intense, the burning love you have inspired. Think not that I would hurt your brother. On the contrary, I have tended him with kindness and care, when there was no one to tend him but myself. I have furnished him with all that was needful for his happiness, and it is his first wish and desire you should be mine. My vehemence has frightened and surprised you, I see; but you know not what it is I feel. Sit down again, dear girl, and listen to me—listen to me but for a moment——"

"No, Count Lieberg," she replied, firmly, "I will not! I will neither sit down nor listen to you at all, but upon one subject. I can easily conceive that you suppose my brother's fate entirely in your hands; but, thank God, my reputation is not; and I believe you speak a falsehood when you say that you can make even the general world, much less those that love and esteem me, believe that I ever was the paramour of a man whom I hate and despise. I believe, sir, that you have told a gross falsehood, for the same base purpose for which you have threatened a brother's life to the ears of his sister."

The look of Helen Barham had changed under the emotions that she felt. Instead of fear, and timidity, and horror, it bore now the look of indignant pride. Her head was raised high, her beautiful nostril expanded, her bright eyes flashed, and Lieberg, though all these signs of anger were displayed against himself, felt passion but the stronger in his heart.

"Nay, nay, Helen," he said, in a quick, but half sportive tone, "if you so dare me, dear lady, I must show that I threaten not without power. Look at these few words of written invitation, in Helen Barham's hand! Sent to me by my own valet last night, after all the household were in bed—'*Whenever you like.—Helen Barham!*'"

To Lieberg's surprise, the horror and detestation which became the predominant expression of Helen's countenance, was unmingled with anything like fear.

"You are a fiend, indeed!" she cried. "You are a fiend, indeed! But, like the machinations of all other fiends, your devices are controlled by the good will of God! When the note that you wrote to me last night, and which you have torn off from the answer, was brought to me, know that I was not alone. It was read by another to me—by one who can swear to every word of it. Thus I set you at nought, scorning you, as well as hating you, feeling as much disgust as horror at your conduct. Let me tell you more, Count Lieberg, that, were there no other man on earth, I would regard you with the same contempt that I do now; that you are personally odious to me; and that were you at my feet to-morrow, with proposals as high and pure, as those of to-day are base and infamous, though I were a beggar in the streets, seeking my bread from door to door, I would spurn you from me, with the same scorn that I do now," and passing him boldly, she rang the bell.

The moment that Helen's hand had left the bell-rope, the stately old landlady burst into the room, with her face all in a glow.

"You shan't be injured, or insulted, in my house, ma'am," she said. "I beg your pardon for listening, ma'am, but I thought you might want a little help from what I saw. The gentleman may take himself where he likes, but he shan't affront you any more here."

Helen burst into tears at this unexpected support; and the good woman, who really, except in money matters, deserved that name, held out her arms towards the agitated and beautiful being before her, saying, in the tone of a mother—

"Come here to me, my dear! You are a good, virtuous girl, and deserve to be taken care of. The coach will go in a quarter of an hour, and my son, Will, shall go with you on the top,

to see that no harm comes to you. There's the picture, my dear—we don't want it; and as for the gentleman, he had better budge, for if my husband had heard all that I have heard, he would have leathered his jacket."

Lieberg gazed at her for a moment, with a look of calm scorn, for his self-possession had been restored in a moment.

"My good woman," he said, "you are a very foolish person; and, if you meddle in this way, with things that don't concern you, you will burn your fingers some day. Miss Barham, we shall meet again, when you will think differently."

"Never!" said Helen; and Lieberg, without more reply, quitted the room, and ordered his horse over to the other inn.

"Feed him," he said, to the hostler who took him, "and bring him round as soon as he is ready."

He then called for a private room, and buried his eyes in his hands till the sound of a coach setting out from the office opposite made him look up. Then biting his lip, without any other gesticulation, he muttered—"Curses upon it all!"

CHAPTER XXIX.

IN LONDON.

In passing through life we must have remarked, not only that the satirical maxim of Rochefaucault is true, with a great number of people, in regard to the pleasures that they derive from the misfortunes of their friends, but that the general world contrives to extract an infinite quantity of amusement, delight, and satisfaction from all the evils that are going on throughout the universe. What a fund of pleasant excitement is there to the minds of many, in that column of a newspaper, headed "Accidents and Offences." What gratification to multitudes in a child being scalded to death, a house being burnt down, a retired tradesman, in a solitary cottage, undergoing the process of murder!

Fie upon it! The morbid taste for stimulating things, that habitual drunkenness of the mind, which is increasing day by day more and more throughout the whole world, excluding the sane, the simple, and the just, must end in moral death—the sad, worn-out, apathetic death of the spirit drinker. On my life, I have a great inclination to shake hands with Father Mathew, and preach a mental teetotalism!

The prevailing spirit, the love of excitement, which is in every human being, was not wanting even amongst the quiet fields and villages around Yelverly; and the news of that famous burglary having spread far and wide, the retired house of Mr. Carr became an object of attention and visitation, for all the places in the neighbourhood. Magistrates flocked in, farmers and yeomen made their appearance, constables, from every place in the vicinity, travelled thither without loss of time; and though many a one winked the eye and laughed at old Carr's misfortune, the general pleasure derived by the multitude from an extensive robbery in that part of the country was of the higher and more interesting kind, called excitement.

The retired lawyer, himself, as his first step, shut up his house, and would let no one in but those whom he knew; and, after he had collected his thoughts in some degree, he visited various parts of the building, opened different drawers and secret cupboards, and found, to his great relief, that the robbers, from their ignorance of his habits, had missed many of the stores which he had fancied carried off. He then gathered together his papers, which were scattered about his room, examined the marks and memorandums upon them, and, to his great joy, perceived that they were all correct. Another thing tended to relieve him from a still greater portion of the load of care, which was, that the plunderers, with a fine apprehension of detection, had displayed a goodly contempt for bank-notes, so that two packets, amounting each to five hundred pounds, were found cast down upon the floor without the slightest sign of veneration.

In the midst of these operations, several magistrates poured in upon him, and all the local wisdom of the neighbourhood was expended during the next three hours, in consulting and considering what was to be done.

The abduction of poor Helen Barham formed one of the principal topics with the magistrates; and Mr. Carr himself expressed much greater anxiety upon the subject than he had ever been known to evince in regard to anybody except his daughter. By the time that the premises had been thoroughly examined, the means by which the robbers had obtained an entrance clearly ascertained, and the route that they had taken in their escape rendered as confused and puzzled as possible, by conflicting testimonies and innumerable conjectures, Count Lieberg's servant had returned from Doncaster, bringing information from some of the magistrates of that place, that three persons of very suspicious look, and one of whom was known to be an infamous character, had appeared in that town on the preceding day, and had suddenly disappeared towards night. All attention was now turned towards Doncaster, every man who thought himself an active magistrate, or who wished to establish for himself such a reputation, set off instantly for that town, while the rest retired to their own houses, satisfied with having talked much and done nothing at all, as is too much the case with county justices and with members of parliament.

When they were all gone beyond recall, and Mr. Carr was left alone, the real track of the plunderers, as so generally happens, was discovered at once by no other event than the passing of the Sheffield coach, and the arrival of Helen Barham. Mr. Carr was really delighted to see her, both because she had proved a pleasant companion to him, and because in the prospect of managing her own and her brother's affairs, he foresaw, or thought he foresaw, the means of recovering, and more than recovering, the riches which the housebreakers had carried away.

Many and eager were his questions, to all of which Helen gave a sincere answer, telling exactly what had occurred, with the exception of those points which referred to her brother William. She related how she had seen the

man's face in her bedroom; how she had been forced to rise and accompany the robbers; how she had pledged herself most solemnly never to give evidence against the man at whose intercession her life was spared; and how she had taken refuge at the Tontine Inn, and come thence by the stage to Yelverly. She would willingly have ended her history there, but Mr. Carr asked, as soon as she paused, if Colonel Lieberg, then, had not found her?

"I regret to say he did, my dear sir," replied Helen, with much agitation; "he found me alone and unprotected, and took that opportunity, when I most needed comfort and help, to insult and grieve me. Had it not been for the kindness of the people of the inn, I do not know what I should have done. I trust," she added, with the tears in her eyes, "that he will not return here while I remain. If he have any feeling of honour or shame left he certainly will not."

"But the manors! my dear Miss Barham—the manors!" cried Mr. Carr; "what can be done about the manors? Oh, he certainly must return here, for he has left his carriage and his servant."

"Then if he does," said Helen, "by your permission, my dear sir, I will remain in my own room till he is gone, and will not see him on any account whatsoever."

"Oh, quite right—quite right, my dear Miss Helen," replied Mr. Carr; "the foolish fellow doubtless thought you poor and friendless; but he will find himself mistaken; and when he sees you with seventy or eighty thousand pounds, or, maybe, with a hundred—for I have not calculated what the arrears will be, and, indeed, cannot, till we enter into the accounts fully—he will change his tone, I am sure."

Helen smiled sadly, for, notwithstanding the belief, which had gained a strong hold of her, that there might be some truth in what Mr. Carr said regarding the claims of her family to greater fortune than they possessed, she could not help looking upon his expectation of recovering it as a mere dream.

"If he were to alter his tone," she replied, "I should certainly never alter mine. But I will go now, Mr. Carr, and write at once to my brother. I have many important things to tell him."

"Bid him come down here with all speed," exclaimed Mr. Carr. "He will soon recover his health here, and if he do not, you will do quite as well; the entail was in the female line, as well as the male, and, indeed——"

"But I thought you proposed, Mr. Carr," said Helen, "to accompany me to London. I know that it is too late to-day, and, indeed, I feel too faint and weak to undertake such a journey without repose; but I did hope that you might be able to go to-morrow, for I only intended to write to my brother to comfort him in the mean time. You heard what that miserable man said about his state of health."

"Oh, he exaggerated—he exaggerated!" answered Mr. Carr. "Don't you see, he had an object to gain? But, however, I will go up, if you like it; and, indeed, perhaps it would be the best way. Then we could settle all things with your brother speedily, and I could set the Bow-street fellows upon the track of these villains who have carried off so much of my property. You say very right, my dear, it will be the best way, and we will go to-morrow—that is, if you be well enough, for we must not risk your life too. You must take care of yourself, my little lady, for you will be a rich dame some of these days, and life becomes well worth preserving, when people have plenty of money."

Helen gazed down upon the ground, and her eyes filled with tears, but she merely replied—"A little repose is all that I require—I shall be quite able to set out to-morrow; but now I will go and write to my brother, and pay the young man from the inn at Sheffield, who is waiting in the kitchen, I fancy."

"Ay, do, my dear Miss Barham—do," said Mr. Carr. "I would offer to pay him, but, really, these men have taken all the money I have got."

"That would be quite unnecessary," replied Helen; "I do not think they took anything from my room, and I have, luckily, plenty of money in my desk."

"Plenty?" said Mr. Carr, with a smile. "Never think you have plenty, my dear Miss Barham; you will always find more than enough to do with it, if you had twenty times as much."

Helen made no reply, but retired to her chamber as she had said, and after having paid the boy from Sheffield, wrote a long letter to her brother, and another to Juliet Carr. To the first she told all that had taken place between herself and Mr. Carr, regarding the fortune which he said was unjustly withheld from them. She entered into the whole of her own recollections, and the facts which induced her to believe that there was some ground for the statements of the old lawyer, and at the same time she informed her brother of her approaching return to London. The most important intelligence of the whole, however, was conveyed in a postscript of a few words, to the following effect:—"You need no longer be under any apprehension regarding the consequences of an act that you lately committed, which you once told me of. Both the papers were destroyed before my own eyes, by a man who seemed to know something of you, and who had obtained possession of them in the commission of another crime."

The letter to Juliet was upon other topics, though she noticed briefly all that had occurred at Yelverly, and stated that she was about to return to London, accompanied by Mr. Carr. In the end of the letter she said—"Count Lieberg has been here, and has justified too sadly the opinion which Sir Morley Ernstein and Lady Malcolm entertained of him. He has insulted me cruelly, dear Juliet; and, I do not know why, but since I have had your friendship, and the support and protection of one who is, I know, very dear to you, my spirit has risen, even in spite of much sadness; and those insults which, a few weeks ago, I looked upon as a part of my fate, a misery that I was born to endure, I now feel angry and indignant at, and my heart burns within me. It seems as if being admitted to call myself your friend, has given

me back a dignity of feeling that misery and friendlessness had before taken from me. Nevertheless, my dear Juliet, you must, on no account, mention this to Sir Morley Ernstein; we both know his noble and his generous nature too well to doubt that it might, and very probably would, produce a quarrel between him and the other, which might end fatally. Just in the proportion as I am unprotected, poor, and without any claim to the generosity and friendship of any one, would he think himself called upon to resent an injury and an evil inflicted upon her to whom he has shown so much disinterested kindness. I tell it to you, because I will conceal nothing from you; but you must on no account let him hear one word of what I have said, as you value your own peace, and as you value mine."

Before Helen had concluded her letter to Juliet Carr, she received a message from the old lawyer, informing her that Count Lieberg had sent somebody from Sheffield with post-horses, to bring away his carriage and servant, as he did not intend to take the manors or return to Yelverly; and about half-an-hour after she was summoned to the drawing-room to speak with two of the magistrates, who had been recalled by Mr. Carr. Their object was, of course, to ascertain in what direction the house-breakers had fled, and by what signs they could be recognized. In regard to the first point, Helen made a clear statement of what had taken place, and repeated what the man, Harry Martin, had said, respecting their soon being safe in Scotland, without at all imagining that these words had been spoken for the express purpose of misleading; but the information that she could or would give in order to identify the plunderers was very small. She described the phaeton generally, but as to the colour, or any other distinctive mark, she could say nothing, having only seen it in the night, and being too much agitated and frightened to take any great notice of it then. The forms and features of the men had been so thoroughly concealed by the smock frocks which they wore, and the crape which was drawn over their faces, that Helen said truly, she could tell nothing regarding them in general by which they could be distinguished from any other men.

"But," exclaimed one of the magistrates, "you saw one of them, Miss Barham! Let us have an account of him, at least. It very often happens that one being known, his accomplices are speedily traced."

"But I told you, sir," replied Helen, apparently with some surprise at the request, "I told you that I had promised most positively never to say anything by which he could be recognized.'

"But of course," cried the magistrate, "you do not intend to regard such a promise as binding!"

"As much as any other promise I ever made," answered Helen; "he might have taken my life if he had liked it, and——"

"But listen to me, my dear young lady," said the other magistrate; "promises made under threats and intimidation are always held to be invalid. Neither law, religion, nor justice, recognize them for a moment."

"I really do not know," replied Helen—"I am no great casuist in such matters. The man did not threaten me in the least degree, but he might have taken my life if he had thought fit. If he had done so, the law would have assigned to him no worse punishment than for breaking into the house; and on no consideration whatsoever will I give the slightest indication by which he may be discovered."

The magistrates then took another turn, and tried to alarm her, saying, they had power to compel her to answer their questions, that she might be treated as an accessory after the fact. Helen, however, turned to Mr. Carr, asking—"Do you suffer this, sir? You are a magistrate also, I think, and I must know if you wish me to be treated in this manner."

"No, no, my dear young lady," said Mr. Carr, moved by very different feelings from those which either Helen or the magistrates attributed to him, and, in fact, looking upon her already as the heiress which he presumed her to be. "No, no, my dear young lady, this shall not be done. Gentlemen, Miss Barham must either be persuaded by fair means, or must be silent at her will. I cannot have her bullied."

The two magistrates seemed somewhat offended at the term which Mr. Carr employed; but the ci-devant lawyer was quite chivalrous in defence of his young friend, quoted all sorts of law to prove that his brethren of the bench were perfectly in the wrong, overwhelmed them with a multitude of obsolete terms, and would hear no argument in reply whatsoever. The two magistrates took up their hats, mortified and annoyed, and, with the dogged stalk of two British mastiffs, marched out of the room and the house, saying, "that Mr. Carr might manage the affair as he liked best himself."

"I will tell you how I will manage it, my dear Miss Barham," he said. "I will put two of the Bow-street runners on the track, and promise them a per centage on every ounce of gold and silver they recover. Much better is it for me to lose a little and get back the money, than to pay a great sum and hang them all. These county magistrates, with one thing or another, would let them go on till all the money was spent, and all the plate melted; but the Bow-street officers will take care of that, if they hope to have a share; and so we will set out for London to-morrow without fail."

The good gentleman's purpose was executed, and he and Helen proceeded to Doncaster, and thence to London, without pause or delay. Mr. Carr himself had a strong objection to inns and hotels, and he consequently drove at once to Lady Malcolm's house, having a sort of claim to the hospitality of that lady, as his wife's first cousin, which he did not fail to put forward on all occasions when he visited London. To his surprise, and that of Helen's, however, a maid-servant opened the door, and informed Mr. Carr that her lady, Miss Juliet, and Sir Morley Ernstein, had gone down together to spend a few days at the little watering-place called Sandgate.

Helen remarked that there was something in this intelligence which made a scowl, such as

she had seldom or ever seen there before, come upon the face of Mr. Carr.

"Gone down to Sandgate with Sir Morley Ernstein?" he exclaimed, swearing a desperate oath at the same time. "That is strange enough!"

"Oh, but she will be up in a day or two, sir," replied the maid, who knew Mr. Carr quite well, and attributed his anger to a wrong cause; "and I am sure she will be delighted if you will stay here till she comes; for she always said that a bed was to be ready for you—and Miss Helen, too, I am sure she will be glad to see. I hope you are well ma'am, and have passed a pleasant time in the country, though you look a little tired like—but I'll go and call the housekeeper."

That functionary accordingly appeared, and confirmed all the maid had said; and though Helen had some hesitation as to remaining at Lady Malcolm's house without an invitation from its mistress, yet the assurances of the housekeeper, who knew her lady well, were so strong, and Mr. Carr insisted so vehemently, that she yielded, and took up her abode in the little room which she had tenanted before, close to that of Juliet Carr.

No sooner was Mr. Carr installed, than he wrote a note of the most pressing kind to his daughter, telling her that he had come to London on business of great moment, and begging her to return instantly to meet him in the capital. He entered into no explanation of his views whatsoever, but requested Juliet, as probably it would be inconvenient for Lady Malcolm to come up with her, not to make any delay on that account, but to set out at once, immediately after receiving this letter.

This being done, and having taken some refreshment, he proceeded at once to the house which Helen had formerly inhabited, where her brother William, who had received her letter in the morning, was waiting in a state of excitement of joy and astonishment impossible to describe. Helen, who accompanied Mr. Carr, remarked one thing, however, which made her fear that her brother had once more fallen amongst bad associates; he was extremely anxious to go into the country, vowed that though Lieberg was a liar, as he broadly termed it, and he had never been seriously ill at all, it would do his health good to be away from London; and added, that if Helen had only given him time, he would have come down to her in the country, without giving her the trouble of coming up to him.

Like all weak persons, William Barham was ever ready to attach himself to any one who would flatter his hopes or his wishes, hating unpalatable truth of all kinds, almost as much when it regarded his own situation, as when it affected his own conduct. With Mr. Carr he was delighted, vowed that he was a very honest fellow—that he would put himself entirely in his hands—and that there could be no earthly doubt that he was quite right in regard to the view he took of the case. Thus, after a long conversation, they parted and Mr. Carr returned with Helen to Lady Malcolm's house, enjoying the idea of having so soft a person to deal with, almost as much as if he had still been a solicitor in full practice.

Helen, however, was sad and dispirited, and felt that the tone of her brother's conversation altogether was painful and distressing. Some time had now elapsed since she had seen him; the effect of the country on her mind had been calm and refreshing; and all that was dark and bad, all that was weak and foolish in the character of her brother, seemed to stand out the more prominently from the state of her own mind. When we wish to see an object distinctly through a glass, we take care to wipe it clean from all specks and dust; and there is nothing that clears the mental vision so much of all the dark and dimming things of earthly life, as calm communion with the spirit of God's works in scenes where man's handy-work has wrought but little.

CHAPTER XXX.

JULIET RECALLED.

In looking at one of the finest and most sunshiny pictures of Claude de Lorraine, and in marking the calm and gentle brightness which his pictures generally display, it has often struck me that they afforded a fine image of happiness—of that pure dreamy happiness which is sometimes the portion of youth.

The three days that Morley Ernstein and Juliet Carr had passed at Sandgate, had been, like one of those pictures of Claude Lorraine, all brightness, all hope. There seemed not to be a cloud in the whole sky; but those sweet days of happiness are often like the glowing mornings of tropical climes, where, in the midst of a heaven previously without spot, a small, dark cloud appears, no bigger than a man's hand, and ere many hours are over, the hurricane sweeps past, and all is destruction, desolation, and sorrow.

The fourth day broke as brightly as any of the former, and Morley Ernstein, who, for propriety's sake—or for the sake of that which a corrupted state of society believes to be propriety—had been driven by Lady Malcolm to sleep at another house, came in to breakfast as usual, and to arrange with her he loved some pleasant scheme for the passing of the coming hours. They had sat up late on the preceding night, enjoying the balmy summer air, as it swept over the sea, and Juliet had not yet quitted her room. At the place where she usually sat, however, had been laid down a letter, and Lady Malcolm, who entered the room first, wondered from whom it could come. Juliet herself soon appeared, and, without noticing the epistle, talked to Morley for some time, upon all those things which first interest lovers when they meet, and might have gone on still longer, had not Lady Malcolm—who was at an age when small matters are great, and who, moreover, had always been gifted with that peculiar sort of irritability which never suffers one to rest till the inside of a letter has been seen—insisted upon Juliet opening hers, though Juliet had said before that it was from her father, and was only that which he wrote her every week.

To please her cousin, however, she broke the seal; but poor Juliet's countenance underwent a

sad change as she read the few lines that it contained, and her voice faltered sadly, as she said—

"My father is in London; he has come up in great haste about various matters, and requires my presence immediately, without a moment's delay. He refers me to a letter from Helen, which I never have received, and speaks of Yelverly having been broken in toby robbers. I am afraid I must go directly, Harriet."

As one may suppose everything was soon in confusion. Lady Malcolm read the letter, and saw that it was imperative. Juliet wished to go alone, but her cousin would not hear of such a thing, and said she was quite ready to return to London: Morley Ernstein professed himself rejoiced that Mr. Carr had come to town, and spoke a few words for Juliet's ear alone, which made the blood mount into her cheek. Lady Malcolm did not seem so well contented, however, and after breakfast she and Juliet consulted together, sending Morley to see that everything was ready for their immediate departure. In five minutes after, however, Lady Malcolm despatched her maid to call him back again, and when he entered the little sitting-room of the inn, he found that good lady standing ready to speak with him, and bearing very much the air of one who has something unpleasant to communicate, and does not well know how to do it.

"My dear Morley," she said, "I have just been talking to Juliet about you and her father; for on hearing that he had come suddenly to town, I began to be in a fright lest something unpleasant might take place, if he saw you at once as the acknowledged lover of his daughter, before he is a little prepared——"

"But, why—why?" demanded Morley, with some surprise. "If he had not come, I should have gone down, as soon as Juliet herself left town, to ask her hand at once. She is well aware that such was my intention. Why should anything unpleasant happen, my dear lady?"

"That is what I was explaining to Juliet," said Lady Malcolm. "A long time ago, there was a sad quarrel between your father and Mr. Carr—all about me, too, unfortunately—and though the thing is passed by and gone, my dear Morley, yet I think it would be very much better if you would let us go up first, and follow to-morrow, when I have seen Mr. Carr, and explained the whole matter to him. Now do not look sad and discomposed; it is only a precaution, but, depend upon it, it is a wise one. He is an irritable and a passionate man, Mr. Carr, and, in the haste of the moment, he might say something which he would never retract. But as I will manage it, all will go right, depend upon it."

"But what says Juliet?" demanded Morley, while that small dark cloud which we have spoken of as announcing the tempests of tropical skies, now first appeared upon the horizon of his own happiness. "What says Juliet, Lady Malcolm? I would fain speak with her. You alarm and surprise me."

Lady Malcolm immediately called Juliet from her room; but she came in with so cheerful a countenance, that the fears which had suddenly taken possession of Morley's heart, disappeared before its sunshine.

"What is this, Juliet," he asked, "that Lady Malcolm tells me? It seems," he continued, "that she and you have determined to cut me off from a day's happiness, dear Juliet; and wish me to stay here till you have seen your father?"

"You are not angry with me for wishing it?" said Juliet, giving him her hand, for he had spoken in a tone of vexation. "If you are, you shall come, Morley. But I thought what dear Lady Malcolm proposed was much better. She has explained to me the cause of my father's crossness on that day when first we met you, which I never knew before. But I am sure that if we have an opportunity of speaking with him calmly and quietly, he will not oppose us in any degree. He never does thwart me, and the only danger lies in taking him by surprise, and provoking him to utter something harsh. When he has said a thing, he adheres to it inflexibly, and, therefore, I thought it much better not to risk anything.—I tell you the whole truth, Morley, as I ever will, and now, having done so, you shall act as you like."

"Then I will stay here, Juliet," replied Morley; "for as my whole happiness depends upon obtaining you, it shall never be said that any rashness of mine whatsoever cast away the cup of happiness when it was so near my lips. I will not set off for London, then, until to-morrow morning, for I fear, Juliet, I could not keep myself away, if I were in the same town with you, and then I should never cease to reproach myself, if anything went wrong."

"Nothing will—nothing can!" said Juliet, with a smile.

Lady Malcolm, finding that their plan was settled, quitted the room for a moment; and Juliet Carr, seeing that a slight shade of apprehension still hung upon her lover's countenance, added—"Nothing will go wrong, Morley, depend upon it; and though I dare not make any other promises, this, at least, I may venture to say; the hand you have sought, Morley, shall never be given to any one else—believe me, on my honour."

"I do believe you, dear Juliet," cried Morley, enthusiastically—"I do believe you, from what I feel myself; for I cannot think that those who have loved as we have, could ever forget that love so far, as, under any circumstances or for any consideration, to enter into an union with another than the person who first possessed their heart.—I do not know why I am apprehensive, Juliet, or of what; but certainly it is not lest you should give your hand to another."

The half-hour that was to intervene before the departure of Lady Malcolm and Juliet Carr passed as rapidly as the half-hours of happiness usually do; and Morley Ernstein was soon left alone to while away the time, amidst scenes which had seemed full of joy and beauty; but it was in truth Juliet Carr that he saw reflected from all on which his eye rested; it was her beauty, her beaming countenance, that he beheld on the sunshiny sea, in the bright landscape, in every ride or drive around; and now that she

was gone, all things seemed, indeed, "flat, stale, and unprofitable."

In vain he sought for occupation or for amusement; his spirit was impatient, his heart was apprehensive. Twenty times in the course of the day, he felt angry with himself for not accompanying Juliet to London—twenty times he felt tempted to send for horses, and follow her as fast as possible.

The day ended at length, notwithstanding all its tediousness, and gladly did he see the following morning break, and the horses brought to the door. The coach went wondrous slow for his impatience, and every stoppage seemed to him an unpardonable crime on the part of the coachman. But the journey, as the tedious waiting of the preceding day had done, and as everything else, whether pleasant or unpleasant, must do, passed away in the end; and towards seven o'clock, he found himself at the door of the hotel.

On his table was a note from Lady Malcolm, very brief, and evidently written in haste. The few words which it contained were as follows:—"My dear Morley, Pray come here directly. I have a great deal to talk to you about; Helen Barham too is here, and has promised to stay with and console me."

Morley Ernstein let the note drop out of his hand. "To stay with and console her!—Console her, for what?" he exclaimed. "In the name of Heaven what has happened?" and snatching up his hat, he darted away to Lady Malcolm's, with the speed of lightning, making no answer to the waiter's demand of, "Dine at home to-day, sir?"

At Lady Malcolm's, the quiet appearance of everything provoked him. Morley Ernstein could not affect a tranquillity he did not feel, and while the man was walking up the stairs before him, as if his joints were becoming ossified, the young gentleman suddenly pushed past him, and entered the drawing-room unannounced.

Lady Malcolm was seated quietly at work, and Helen Barham was reading; but, though Morley looked round for the bright angelic face of Juliet, and the less prepossessing one of Mr. Carr, no such objects presented themselves; and the grieved, anxious expression of Helen's countenance, as she raised her eyes and beheld him, told at once that something painful had happened something which she knew would distress him much.

"Oh, dear, I am so glad you are come!" exclaimed Lady Malcolm, "though I am sure I do not know what is to be done—but you must judge yourself."

"Where is Juliet?" demanded Morley, eagerly interrupting Lady Malcolm—"where is Juliet, dear Lady Malcolm?"

"She is gone," replied Lady Malcolm; "Mr. Carr would take her home with him, in spite of all I could say. I explained the whole to him; and Juliet herself, I am sure, told him all; but he said nothing but 'hum,' and 'ha!' and in reply, when I told him you would be here to-night, he only grumbled that he was sorry, but could not stay."

Morley stood still in the middle of the room, without attempting to take a seat, and looked steadfastly down upon the ground, asking himself what he should do next.

"My dear Lady Malcolm," he said, at length, "you must forgive me for making my visit a very hurried one. I can bear anything but uncertainty, and I must set off immediately for Yelverly."

"Not to-night!" exclaimed Lady Malcolm.

"Yes, this very night, dear lady!" replied Morley; "I should not sleep five minutes if my head were on the softest pillow in England; so I may as well pass the hours of darkness in my carriage as anywhere else. I shall be at Morley Court about mid-day to-morrow, and can see Juliet and her father, and know my fate before another night pass over my head."

"Oh! it will all go very well," said Lady Malcolm; "do not be afraid, my dear Morley. If you but consider, you will see that Mr. Carr will never be so foolish as to make any difficulty. He thinks of nothing on earth but money, you know, and in that point he certainly cannot object to you."

Morley smiled sadly, but still with some renewal of hopes, and he answered: "Well, we shall see; but at all events I cannot bear uncertainty, and will go away at once."

"Nay, nay," rejoined Lady Malcolm—"stay a little; here is your young friend Helen Barham, to whom you have not said a word."

Morley felt that he had been unkind, and going round, he took Helen's hand. It was as cold as marble; and, as she looked up in his face, it was with an expression that struck him much, and carried him away for a moment from the selfishness of his own sorrow. The look was not a grave one; on the contrary, it was intended to be cheerful; but the forced smile, the eyes that were full of sadness, the quivering of the lip and nostril, betraying a struggle against tears, all spoke of grief at heart; and Morley, after conversing with her for some little time, went away from Lady Malcolm's house, saying to himself—as I have had occasion to say more than once—although he saw nothing of the feelings that he commiserated, except that they were sorrowful—"Alas, poor Helen Barham!"

CHAPTER XXXI.

AN ACCIDENT.

It was at Yelverly, on a summer's evening, but not upon one of those bright evenings which I have described in another place. The sky was covered with grey clouds, the wind was from the cold north-east, sweeping sorrowfully over the fields and through the hedge-rows round Yelverly; and that which had seemed sunshiny, rich, and beautiful, was now to the eye all cold, sad, and desolate. The cattle gathered themselves under the shelter of the hedges, the sheep drew close together, the birds sat motionless upon the boughs, and some wheeling flights of crows, high up in the sky, added to the autumnal look which had so suddenly come over the world.

Notwithstanding the inauspicious aspect of

the afternoon, Juliet Carr had wandered forth with a shawl wrapped close over her fair bosom to keep out the rude touch of the blast, and her veil thrown over her head and face. Her heart was somewhat sad, as may well be supposed, for she had been suddenly separated, without the slightest expectation of being so, from him that she loved best on earth. But still, though her mind was not of a very sanguine or hopeful nature, and her feelings were as deep and keen as ever dwelt in woman's heart, yet she was no more than sad, for not one word had passed her father's lips to make her think he would absolutely disapprove of her union with Morley Ernstein. He had remained perfectly silent upon the subject: somewhat gloomy, indeed, but nothing more; and that gloominess Juliet thought might, perhaps, proceed from a feeling of indisposition, for the fatigues of the journey had brought on an attack of illness, which, though not alarming, was severe.

To see him suffer, of course, had not lightened the load upon his daughter's heart; more especially as, at such moments, he repelled every effort to soothe and comfort him. Indeed, it was clear that, in sickness, he preferred being attended by any one else than Juliet; and the sight of her, whose appearance was hailed in the cottage of the poor as the visit of a consoling angel, seemed rather to affect Mr. Carr, in his hours of illness, with painful and unpleasant feelings. He had always some excuse ready for sending her away, and this was so marked that she perceived it, and perceived it with sorrow.

Such had been the case on the present occasion. Juliet and her father had arrived the day before at Yelverly, Mr. Carr feeling himself at the time extremely unwell. His illness had increased considerably during the night; and Juliet, though evidently not much to his satisfaction, had remained attending upon him during the whole day. Towards evening, however, he became more impatient; and upon pretence that it was better for her health to take exercise, he insisted upon her going out—reminding her, that the cottagers on different parts of the estate had not seen her for some weeks.

Juliet, at the time I have brought her before the reader's eyes again, had strolled out to one of the distant hamlets which belonged to her father, had called at two or three of the houses, where no slight joy and satisfaction had greeted her arrival, had seen that all which could be done to promote the happiness and comfort of the poor had been executed during her absence, and was walking home again, with a heart somewhat sorrowful, when she heard the sound of a horse's feet proceeding at a rapid pace along the highway hard by. She was at this time in one of the small green fields that I have mentioned, about a mile and a half from Yelverly house, and was crossing the meadow by a foot-path running from one corner to another, which was terminated by a gate and stile leading to the main road.

Juliet's heart beat at the sound of that horse's feet, she knew not well why, for manifold were the horsemen who rode along that road, and not a few of them went at the same rapid and impatient pace which those footfalls indicated; but yet her heart beat with the thought that it might be Morley Ernstein; and, though it was very natural that she should so think, for love is as full of hopes as fears—rapid, causeless, wild—yet she scolded herself for entertaining idle expectations, when she had no right whatever to suppose that Morley could have followed her so soon.

Juliet looked eagerly forward as she approached the stile, before which the horseman must pass, and in a moment after, the figure of Morley Ernstein himself flitted across like lightning, mounted on the same splendid horse which he was riding when they met under the walls of his own park. He turned not his head to the right or to the left, little dreaming that Juliet was so near; and though she would have given a world to call to him, knowing right well that Yelverly was the object of his ride, and that he would be sadly disappointed at not finding her there, yet a feeling of modest shame withheld her till it was too late.

Quickening her pace to look after him, however, Juliet approached the stile rapidly; but just as she reached it the clatter of the horse's feet for a moment increased, then ceased altogether—it seemed to her very strangely; and when, throwing open the gate, with a beating heart, she looked down the road in the direction which Morley had taken, she saw the horse just struggling up from the ground, and her lover lying motionless beside it.

Juliet screamed not, she paused not, she uttered not a word, but darted on like lightning. The horse was all cut and bleeding, showing with what a shock he had fallen; but the poor animal, as if with generous forgetfulness of his own suffering, after the first trembling gaze around him, bent down his head to the prostrate body of his master, seeming to inquire why he lay there so still and silent.

Oh, how cold was the heart of Juliet Carr, when coming up she looked upon the motionless form of him she loved best on earth, and asked herself—"Is he dead!" She knelt down, she raised his head, she gazed upon his face. It was covered with dust from the road, but there was no blood. The fine expressive eyes were closed, the teeth were hard set; but as she looked upon him he drew a deep breath. There was still life! and her first words were—"Praise be to God!"

Just at that moment, clear and gay, came the merry note of some peasant boy, as he whistled across the lea. Sad, sad, were those merry sounds to the ear of Juliet Carr, and yet they brought the hope of relief, for the place was at the distance of half a mile to any dwelling-house, and she feared to leave Morley lying there while she ran to procure help. Advancing to a gate a little further on, she looked into the field, and saw the boy whose wild music she had heard, coming slowly and heavily along, with some instrument of husbandry upon his shoulder, and beckoning him eagerly to her, she sent him away to the nearest cottages to procure all the assistance that he could.

In the mean while she remained by the side of him she loved, gazing down upon him with eyes from which the tears now began to drop fast, and

watching with faint hope for some sign of returning consciousness. She made some efforts, too, to call him to life herself: she untied the handkerchief that was round his neck, she opened the collar of his shirt, she brought some water in her fair hands from a neighbouring stream; and, kneeling down beside him, sprinkled his brow; and, as she did so, Juliet looked timidly around to see if any one was near, and then pressed her lips upon his forehead and dewed it with her tears.

Morley moved not, however, even at the touch of love, though he still breathed; and in about a quarter of an hour four men came down, bringing a hurdle from one of the neighbouring fields. Upon it Morley Ernstein was laid, and the men, lifting him up, under Juliet's direction, carried him to Yelverly, the boy leading the horse, which had never attempted to stir from the spot.

Arrived at the house, Morley Ernstein was carried up-stairs and laid in the room which had been inhabited by Lieberg, Juliet accompanying the people who bore him thither, and casting aside the consideration of everything else but the one great object of doing all in her power to restore him to life. A man was instantly despatched on horseback for a surgeon, and Juliet hastened to tell her father what had happened, and to seek his approval of her conduct.

She found, however, that the news had been already communicated, but what surprised her more was to find a stranger seated by her father's bedside. He was a sickly-looking young man —but to spare further description, I may add, that though a stranger to Juliet, he is not so to the reader, being no other than the brother of Helen Barham. The young man started up somewhat awkwardly, for he had been little used to the society of ladies, and had not those qualities in his own character which enable men of fine minds to assimilate themselves rapidly to what is higher, nobler, and more graceful in the mind and demeanour of others.

Juliet's pale face and haggard look, while she told her father of the accident which had occurred, did not escape the old man's eyes, and he fixed a keen and searching look upon his daughter's countenance which pained Juliet, and added other apprehensions to those which she already entertained.

"I think, Juliet," he said, as she concluded, "that you might have taken him to some cottage nearer than this house, and not have put me to all the expense and trouble of having him here."

"Oh, my dear father!" exclaimed Juliet, turning away with a sad and reproachful look; but Mr. Carr, who displayed in general a deference for her opinion, which he did not evince for that of any one else, cried out quickly, "Well, well, Juliet, the thing is done now and cannot be helped; we must make the best of it."

At that moment one of the maids entered the room with a quick step, saying, "Miss Carr—Miss Carr! there's Mr. Langley, the surgeon, up at the rectory, with Mrs. Lee the rector's wife."

"Send for him directly," cried Juliet, following the maid out of the room—"lose not a minute, Jane."

The girl hastened away herself, and in about ten minutes more the surgeon was in the house. Juliet accompanied him to the room where Morley Ernstein lay, and watched with anxiety—which may have been deeply felt by those who love, but can never be described even by those who have felt it—the long, the terribly long examination on which hung the hopes of life and death. She uttered not a word; she breathed not a sigh; she was so still in that intense anxiety, that she not only felt but could hear her heart beating.

The surgeon turned round, at length, and looked at her, seeing then, for the first time, that some deep feeling was busy in her bosom. He spoke not to her, but bowed his head gently, with a look of encouragement; and then the tears burst forth in floods from her eyes, and she turned away towards the window. At the same moment the surgeon drew from his pocket that little case of instruments, the sight of which has so often produced the shudder of mortal antipathy on the manly frame—the operation of which has with equal frequency plunged hearts full of affection and tenderness into the bitterest agony of earthly sorrow, or restored smiles and sunshine to the bright domestic hearth.

The lancet and the bandage were soon produced, and the red blood spouted freely from the arm of the injured man. A minute or two after, while Juliet was still looking forth from the window, she heard a voice which made her whole frame thrill. It was the rich melodious tone of the lips of him she loved, but low and softened; and darting to the bedside, she cast herself upon her knees, exclaiming, "Thank God!—thank God!"

Great indeed was the change which the flowing of that blood produced. The dull heavy aspect of life without intelligence was gone. The clear bright soul had resumed its sway in the mortal tenement, and looked out from the window of the eye.

"Juliet, Juliet!" said Morley Ernstein, "where am I? Something has happened!"

But the surgeon held up his hand, saying, "Do not speak. You must be kept perfectly quiet, especially till the blood has flowed freely. This will all pass away, but we must guard against any fever.—Do not be agitated, my dear Miss Carr, all will go well, I assure you. The only thing that is necessary is quiet: and therefore I must now have the room cleared. Two or three days of perfect tranquillity and confinement will remove all evil, except aches and bruises. So you may rest satisfied, and leave this gentleman to my care without any apprehension."

"I will leave him for the present," replied Juliet; "but I must be his nurse, Mr. Langley. I have known this gentleman from childhood, and I am sure that Sir Morley Ernstein will like my tending as well as that of any other."

"Better—far better—than any on the earth," replied Morley, holding out his hand to her, while the surgeon was busy binding the bandage round his other arm. "To see you near me, Juliet, is enough of itself to make me well.—I remember now that my horse fell, but how I came hither I do not recollect."

"We will tell you all that afterwards," replied

the surgeon; "and if, in order to make you well, Miss Carr must come back again," he added, with a meaning smile, "I can have nothing to say; only she must leave you for the present—for two or three hours at least. During that time I must stay and watch you; but when I am sure that all is going on right, she shall take her turn."

On leaving the room of Morley Ernstein, Juliet proceeded at once to the chamber of her father, to report the state of their young guest; for although she was almost sure to find, in any communication with Mr. Carr, something to shock and pain her, yet she struggled against the repugnance naturally engendered by his words and demeanour, and overcame, from a sense of duty, every inclination to conceal from the eyes of her parent the feelings of her own heart.

Had she found her father alone on the present occasion, all that she felt towards Morley Ernstein would undoubtedly have been poured forth; but William Barham was still with him, and Juliet saw with some apprehension that Mr. Carr's face was flushed and feverish. He was irritable too, and spoke angrily of her having been so long away. She listened with patience, and made no reply, but informed him of the state of Sir Morley Ernstein, and told him the surgeon's opinion, that the young baronet would soon be well.

"I wish, my dear father," she added, in the end, "that you would see Mr. Langley yourself. You do not seem at all better, and as he is now in the house, it would be wiser to consult him."

"If he will not charge it as a visit to me," said Mr. Carr, "I shall have no objection. But I am not going to pay him for doctoring me when he is getting paid for his time by this young Baronet."

"Then I will send him, sir," said Juliet, and much reason had she to be glad that she had persuaded her father to see the surgeon; for it proved that Mr. Carr was more seriously ill than he imagined, and the recovery of Morley Ernstein was much more rapid than his own. Nevertheless, more than one week passed before the young Baronet was suffered to quit his room; and the situation of Juliet Carr, it must be owned, was somewhat strange, not only in relation to Morley, but also in relation to William Barham, who, at Mr. Carr's request, continued to reside in the house.

Many hours of the day, then, did Juliet spend with Morley Ernstein, cheering him, soothing him; and the only restraint that she did put upon herself was to ensure that those hours were not passed with him alone—so long, at least, as he was confined to his own chamber. There was always some servant in the room with her—not a little to Morley's annoyance, if we may say the truth—but two or three gentle words from Juliet, explaining to him her reasons, convinced him that she was right. He loved her too well to wish that, for his sake, she should do anything which might bring one reproach upon his future wife.

Still those hours were most sweet to both of them—perhaps not the less sweet for the slight restraint under which they laboured; for there are times, as every one must have felt when the partial indulgence of our feelings gives greater delight than even the full enjoyment, as the slight airy haze which sometimes covers a landscape makes it seem more beautiful than it would appear unveiled and distinct. The time soon came, however, when he could come down to the drawing-room, and sit with her there alone, but it was only during one day that he enjoyed that privilege, for William Barham, who had previously remained almost entirely in Mr. Carr's room, except in those hours when he was rambling over the country round, now contrived to intrude his society continually upon Morley Ernstein and Juliet, although it must have been very evident to him that his company was anything but pleasant to them, and although he himself always seemed ill at ease in the presence of the young Baronet.

On their first interview, as may be well supposed, Morley was not a little surprised to find him in England, and at Yelverly; but the account of his shipwreck was soon given, and his appearance there was explained by the old friendship of Mr. Carr for several members of his family. After some questions on these subjects, Morley paid little or no attention to him, except as an annoying restraint upon Juliet and himself. In order to free himself from such a check, Morley urged the surgeon vehemently to let him go out sooner than the man of healing was inclined to permit. At length, however, the prohibition was taken off; and that very day the lover accompanied Juliet Carr upon her morning walk. But of the walk itself, and of all that followed, we must speak in another chapter.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A FAREWELL.

Love is certainly a strange and wonderful power, affecting all things, within us and without us, by its own magical influence, brightening all things, calling forth beauty from all things, bringing out infinite variety from objects that would otherwise be tame and full of sameness, and impressing with the stamp of immortal memory, feelings, thoughts, and words that seem the most evanescent, light, and transitory.

Morley and Juliet walked on with love for their sole companion; but, oh! how that sweet comrade of the way enriched with marvellous splendour the calm fields of Yelverly. But not only for them did he produce changes, but in them also were wonderful alterations effected. The lovely countenance of Juliet Carr, always full of deep and high expression, now became the mirror of all the thousand emotions that trembled in her bosom. It was like a beautiful lake rippled by the gentle wind of an April day, which wafted over it innumerable bright gleams and soft shadows, rendering it not only lovely in itself, but lovely in its varieties. The sunshine was predominant, though there were still some clouds, as I have said, for where can there be vast hopes without light fears? and though Juliet knew not what it was she apprehended,

yet, from time to time, there was a doubt came over her to soften the feeling of joy, like the flattened third, which will often throw into a gay piece of music a tone of melancholy, which renders the whole far more touching.

With Morley Ernstein that bright dream of youth was warmer and more glowing still, and he would have called himself completely happy, had it not been that fate still left that *something to be wished for* which accompanies us from the cradle to the grave.

That there was something to be wished for, that the hand of Juliet Carr was not yet his, that it was still the object of hope and expectation, could scarcely be said to diminish the enjoyment of Morley Ernstein; but yet his eager nature, the fiery and impetuous spirit, of which I have so often spoken, was at that time in full ascendancy, and did not suffer the calmer, the more placid spirit of the soul, to rest satisfied with that tranquil happiness which he possessed, and which might have lasted for many a day longer, had he not grasped at more. He was anxious to know his fate, he was anxious to call Juliet his own, and he pressed her vehemently to communicate at once to her father the love that existed between them, and to beg his sanction of their immediate union.

There were contending emotions in Juliet's breast, there was a timid shrinking from the task of avowing her love to any one but him who possessed it, and yet a reluctance to withhold any part of her confidence from her father, even for an hour. Had it not been for this latter feeling she would have urged Morley to wait patiently for some time, to stay till Mr. Carr was no longer oppressed and irritated by sickness, to enjoy the bright present, and not to rush too rashly into the dim future; but the thought of duty intervened, though she did hesitate in some degree, saying—

"My father is still very unwell, Morley, and I really do not know whether I shall have any opportunity to-day; for that youth is now continually with him, and not only that, Morley, but when he is sick he seems so impatient of my society, and, in spite of all that I can do to soothe and please him, sends me so soon away, that whatever I have to say to him I am generally compelled to say abruptly. Now, dear Morley, I could not enter upon this subject abruptly—at least, it would be with very great pain that I did so."

Nevertheless, Morley Ernstein still pressed his request, and Juliet, not grieved but agitated, consented to do what he wished, and returned with him to the house, thoughtful, silent, and with steps somewhat wavering and uncertain.

"It must be done, some time, dear Juliet," said Morley, after they had entered the mansion, "and it were better done at once, my beloved. I will wait for you here; and, oh! come back to me, Juliet, with bright looks and happy tidings."

Morley Ernstein remained alone in the drawing-room, and he had not been there five minutes before he began to think that Juliet was long in returning.

A quarter of an hour went by—half an hour came to an end, and, muttering, "Surely something must be the matter," Morley opened the drawing-room door. There came a low murmuring sound from the chamber of Mr. Carr, as if two persons were conversing eagerly, and in the tone of one of them Morley recognized, at once, the voice of Juliet. Although the door between Mr. Carr's room and the passage prevented what was said from being heard, Morley instantly drew back, lest even a word should catch his ear; but he was not destined to remain long in suspense. A moment after, the door of Mr. Carr's room opened and closed, and the step of Juliet Carr was heard in the passage. But where was its elastic lightness? Where the quick and bounding tread with which she used to seek the room where Morley Ernstein waited her?

She came slowly, seemingly sadly. He could bear the doubt no more, and once more going forth, he looked up the passage in the direction of Mr. Carr's chamber. Juliet was there, but she was pale, trembling, supporting her half fainting steps by laying her hand upon the cornice of the old wainscot, and with her bright eyes deluged in tears. As soon as she saw him, she made an effort and came forward more quickly, and Morley, throwing his arm around her, drew her into the drawing-room and closed the door. He pressed her to his bosom, he asked her again and again, in a tone of wild anxiety, what it was that grieved her; but Juliet continued to hide her face upon his breast, and weep in silence for several minutes, speech, and almost thought, seeming for the time denied to her.

At length, however, she sobbed forth a few inarticulate words. They were merely—"It is all in vain, Morley—it is all in vain! I can never be yours. I have promised not to stay with you either—I must leave you, to see you no more;" and again her face, which she had raised for a moment to speak, fell upon his bosom, and her eyes deluged it with tears.

"God of Heaven!" cried Morley Ernstein, "what is the meaning of this, Juliet? I must not—I cannot—I will not, lose you so! To what can your father object? With what can he find fault, in myself, my fortune, and my station?"

"It is not that—it is not that!" cried Juliet. "It is ancient hatred, Morley—it is other plans, other designs. Oh, Heaven! that my father should ever have a share in causing you such grief!"

"Grief, indeed!" cried Morley Ernstein. "But will you, Juliet—will you suffer yourself to be the means of inflicting such grief upon me? Juliet, you must not, you cannot act so. You are pledged and plighted to me. You are mine, my beloved, and I will never forego my claim upon your hand. Oh, Juliet! if you love me, if you have ever loved me, you will not fail me now in this hour of terrible trial. Juliet, you must consent to be mine at all risks, and without the consent of any one, if that consent is withheld upon such unworthy grounds. If one word can be brought against my character and reputation, if it can be shown that I have done anything in life base, dishonourable, or wrong, I will submit, not without agony, but

without a murmur. But, Juliet, if such is not the case, and if you have no reason to believe that I am unworthy of you, you have a duty to perform to me as well as to others, and, dear Juliet, I call upon you, by every tie of love and affection, to perform it at once. Fly with me, Juliet—fly with me! Once united, your father will readily forgive a step to which he himself drove us. Fly with me, and be mine at once——"

As he spoke he pressed her closer to his bosom, but Juliet drew back and disengaged herself from his arms, still leaving her hand in his, however. "Morley, it must not, and it cannot be," she said. "What! would you have Juliet Carr fly from the house of her sick father, for the purpose of violating his express commands? Oh, no, Morley!—no, that can never be. You would despise me if I did it. But that is not the only obstacle, Morley; there are a thousand things that you will learn too soon, which would render it impossible for me to give you my hand now, even were I willing to forget my duty to my parent. Oh, no, no," she continued, while the tears which had ceased for a moment again burst forth from her eyes—"the time will come when you will hate me, Morley, when you will abhor the day that you first knew anything of me or mine. That—that is worse than anything to bear—to think that you should ever have cause to look upon the day that you met Juliet Carr, as the most unfortunate of your life."

Morley Ernstein gazed upon her for a moment in silence, puzzled by the words she uttered; but at length he said—"What is it you mean, Juliet?—You are going to give your hand to another! Oh, Juliet Carr! beware, beware! Think upon the responsibility you draw upon your own head. Remember, you not only blast my happiness and peace for ever, but you take from me all confidence in virtue—all belief in honour—all trust in human love! You drive me to vice, to wickedness, perhaps to crime; you plunge me into that whirl of dissipation and folly, which is the only resource for reckless, hopeless, trustless despair.—Juliet, you are going to wed another, and ruin both yourself and me!"

"Never, never, never!" cried Juliet, vehemently. "Morley, you do me wrong; indeed, indeed you do! I call that God to witness, whose will I believe I am obeying in sacrificing my own happiness to the commands of my parent, that no consideration upon earth shall ever induce me to give my hand to any other man; that I will love you ever, dear Morley, to the last hour of my life, that I will pray for you as for a brother dearest to my heart, and that, when death shall free me from a world where there is nothing but sorrow before me, you shall have a token to know that my affection was unchanged even to the last hour. I ask nothing of you, Morley, in return," she continued, after a moment's pause—"I ask nothing in return, but that you should try never to think harshly of poor Juliet Carr; to separate her acts in your mind from the acts of others, and, if you have ever loved her and esteemed her truly, to remember her but for the purpose of keeping yourself firm and steadfast in all those high and noble principles that shed around you a glory in her eyes which shall never pass away from the picture that memory will supply of the only man she ever loved. Let me ever hear of you with pride and pleasure, Morley. Let me hear, too, of your being happy—as happy as the circumstances will permit. Yes, Morley," she added, laying both her hands gently upon his arm, "happy with another, who may love you, perhaps, nearly as well as I do, and who may render your future life brighter than I can do."

Morley cast himself down in a seat, and hid his eyes with his hands; not that they contained a tear, for they burned in his head like living coals, but to shut out, as it were, the terrible and confused images that flitted before his sight as a vision of the future.

"Farewell, Morley," said the voice of Juliet, sadly and solemnly, as if she was speaking on the bed of death—"farewell, Morley—farewell for ever!"

Morley Ernstein started up and caught her again to his bosom. Tears came then to his relief, he kissed her again and again with agony which those only can conceive who have known what it is to part for ever with those that they loved best on earth. Juliet wept, too, in silence for a moment, and then again murmuring—"Farewell!" she tore herself from him, and darted away.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE LOST CHILD.

THE chilly wind that sighed in long heavy gusts over moor and fell and wild grass-covered mountain, the damp rawness of the air, the heavy clouds that lay detached in strange-shaped masses upon the edge of the distant horizon, all told that the sweet season of the summer was come to a close, and that the world was dropping into the old age of the year.

In the northern parts of England, the summer often seems to go out, as it were, at once, and autumn, especially towards sunset, puts on the chilling aspect of the winter. But the moment at which I choose to open this chapter was beyond that of sunset by some hours, and the traveller who rode alone through a wild, bleak part of Northumberland, appeared, by the rapidity of his pace, to be eager to arrive at some place of shelter for the night.

The fresh and beaming countenance of Morley Ernstein, which but a few short months before, when he was first introduced to the reader, breathed health, and strength, and energy, was now pale, and anxious, and depressed. The air, the bland expression of youth, was gone; sorrow and disappointment, and strong passionate thought, had set the seal of mature life upon his brow. Every touch of early years and fresh inexperience was done away, and any one who could have looked upon his countenance would have said that six or seven-and-twenty years must have passed over his head, rather than the shorter, brighter count of one-and-twenty.

Though the night was chilly and raw, as I have stated, it was not dark; a grey film indeed covered the sky, composed of cold damp vapours, driven hastily along by the keen wind. But beneath was the moon, which was now near the edge of the horizon, and which not only afforded a considerable portion of light, even when her broad disk was not seen, but from time to time glanced through the hurrying clouds, and glared, large, and cold, and wan, upon the traveller's eye.

He was crossing an open moor at a rapid rate, when a faint cry of some kind struck his ear. He paid no attention to it, however, thinking that it proceeded from some wild bird of night, startled from its marshy nest by the sounding feet of his horse; and rode quickly on, still plunged in his own thoughts, when suddenly the beast that bore him shied wildly from some object at the side of the road, and Morley Ernstein, catching up the rein, drew the animal in, and turned his head towards the thing that had frightened him. He then heard the voice of a child, apparently crying bitterly, and although he had become by this time reckless and careless of himself, the better part of his heart's feelings was still untouched, and, springing to the ground, he approached the spot where the little wanderer sat.

Morley found there a boy of about four years old, who at first made no answer to his manifold questions but by tears. At length, however, he made out that the poor child was crying for some one whom he had lost, and whom he called "Annie;" but difficult indeed was it to discover where or how this person was to be found. All that the boy could tell was, that he had left her "by the fire," and Morley in vain endeavoured to discover where the cottage lay to the fire in which he fancied the poor child alluded; the urchin still replying to all inquiries that he had left Annie by the fire.

"Well, my boy," said Morley, in a kindly tone, "shall I take you to seek for Annie?" and the child, instantly starting up, held out his hand. "I will take you up before me on the horse," continued the gentleman, and the boy showed anything but unwillingness, exclaiming —"Harry did that."

The young gentleman accordingly remounted, taking the little fellow up on the pommel of the saddle. "Now, which way shall I turn, my man?" he said. But the boy could give him no information; and he rode on, determined to place the child in safety at the next village, and then to send out different persons to inquire for his parents. Proceeding more slowly than he had hitherto done, Morley advanced across the moor, the undulations of the ground preventing him from seeing beyond a few hundred yards around him. At length a bright glare suddenly burst upon his sight, rising over the slope before him, and a moment or two after he came in sight of one of those immense fires of waste coal, which mark out the edges of pits in the North. The flame rose up many yards in height, waving to and fro, as the keen wind drove it, and canopying itself with a cloud of lurid smoke, while below appeared the intense glow of the fire, spreading over some twenty or thirty feet of ground.

"There—there's the fire!" cried the boy; "Annie's by the fire—Annie's by the fire!" and Morley beginning to comprehend what the poor baby meant, pushed his horse onwards towards the glare, though it was not without great difficulty that he forced the animal to approach it. No human form, however, appeared by the light, and the boy, after seeming somewhat bewildered, exclaimed—"No, it is not there—no, it is not there.—It is the other fire."

At the same time he pointed with his hand towards the east, and Morley, following that indication, turned his horse once more upon the road. As soon as he had issued forth from the bright red light that spread around, he perceived a faint glow at some distance, in the direction towards which the boy had pointed; and, as he rode onward, he found that he was approaching another of the pit-mouths, where a still larger pile of waste coal than that which he had before seen was blazing up into the sky. Before he reached it, however, the road dipped down into a little ravine, and as he followed its course, losing sight of the fire for a moment, he heard the voice of lamentation, and a moment or two afterwards some one from the top of the bank exclaimed, in a tone of agony—"Have you found him, Harry?—have you found him?"

Morley drew in his horse. "If it be of a child you are speaking," he cried, raising his voice, "I have just found one on the moor. He is quite safe, and I will bring him round to the fire in a minute."

The voice which had spoken made no reply, but in a moment or two after, Morley's horse carried him again within sight of the pit-mouth, which was still at the distance of three or four hundred yards. By the light of the burning coal, he beheld a female figure walking about with gesticulations which he easily conceived to be those of grief; but it was evident that the person whom he there saw could not be the woman whose voice he had heard from above, when he was in the ravine. He rode on, however, towards the fire, and was again saluted by the name of Harry as he came up, though, the moment after, the mistake was perceived, and the old woman, for such she was, who stood by the blaze, drew back a step or two, as if inclined to avoid him. No sooner did she behold the child, however, than she darted forward, and held out her arms, exclaiming, with a wild cry of joy—"He's saved!—he's saved!"

The young gentleman lifted the boy gently down to her, and then dismounted himself, not a little interested in all that he saw; and, to say the truth, at that moment Morley Ernstein was not a little glad to find that any subject upon earth could afford him matter of interest even for a moment.

The woman's first impulse led her to kiss the child again and again, even before she offered any thanks to his restorer. The boy also showed not a little joy at finding himself again in the arms of the old woman, and by the terms of endearment which he applied to her, Morley discovered that it was herself he had wished to

designate by the name of Annie—by which, probably, he meant Granny. While he stood and gazed, however, at the joyful meeting between old age and infancy, the group was joined by another person, who seemed more deeply affected than even the old dame. It was a young woman of some three or four-and-twenty years of age, who now came running at full speed from the bank above the ravine, and she, too, without noticing Morley, caught the child to her bosom, pressing it close, and kissing it a thousand times. The young Baronet did not doubt for a moment that she was the boy's mother, for only a mother's heart could prompt such emotions as he there beheld.

When she had given vent to her feelings for a moment or two, however, she set the child down beside her, still holding it tight by the hand, and turned to gaze in silence upon Morley Ernstein, in which occupation the old woman was already deeply busy.

Both gazed for more than a minute at Morley without speaking, and then turned their looks inquiringly towards each other, as if doubtful what to say or how to act, and at length the younger drew the elder aside, and spoke to her for a moment or two in a whisper, while Morley Ernstein looked around him, not a little surprised at everything that he beheld.

"I will stay and see what comes of all this," he said to himself. "Occupation must now be my great object in life, the deadening of remembrance and regret, the striving for forgetfulness. I may as well take the matter for fresh thoughts wherever I find it.—I will pass the night here, it will be better than the dull solitude of Warmstone, where I should have nothing but bitter memory for my companion.

As he thus communed with himself, the murmured conversation between the two women was brought to an end, and the younger one advanced towards him, still speaking a word or two more to the other, "No, no, mother," she said, "he is not one of those; I know such sort of people better than you do. They may put on the clothes of a gentleman, but they never look like him. This is not one of them depend upon it. See how he stands; you never saw a thief-taker stand like that."

The old woman made no reply, and the young one continued, addressing herself now to Morley Ernstein. "I am very much obliged to you, sir," she said, "and thank you a thousand times for saving my child, and bringing him back to me. He strayed away from his grandmother while she fell asleep by the fire, and we feared that he might have fallen into some old pit. I am very much obliged to you, sir, indeed, and thank you with my whole heart!"

As she spoke, she made Morley a low and graceful courtesy; but he replied, "Is not your husband looking for the child?—What you said to me from the top of the bank, when you first heard my horse's feet, made me think so, at least."

"He *is* looking for the boy, sir," answered the younger woman, "but he will soon be back again.—I am very much obliged to you, sir;" and again she made a low courtesy as if to intimate that she wished the conference to come to an end. But Morley did not choose that such should be the case, and he exclaimed—"I will go and seek for him. He is doubtless anxious about the child, and may very likely not return for long, unless he knows that the boy is found."

"Oh, he will return, there is no fear, sir," replied the younger woman. "He is anxious enough, poor fellow, no doubt; but he will soon return, I am sure."

"You had better go away, young gentleman—you had better go away," cried the old woman, chiming in, with a more peremptory tone; "they are wild people in these parts, and you can do no good by staying here, and may do harm. You had better go away, I say, for this is no place for you—nor for me either," she added, in a lower tone. "I was never born for all this."

Though there was certainly a sort of menace in the tone of the old woman, his curiosity was but the more excited, and he replied, without hesitation—"Oh, dear, no! You had better let me go and look for him. It is the way of this world, where a man who has lost one thing must always go and help his neighbour who has lost something else."

"I think you are laughing at us," said the younger woman, gravely; "and I tell you, too, I wish you would go, sir. It may be better for you if you do. If you have really lost anything, and any one here has found it, it shall be sent back to you."

"I am not laughing at you, my good lady," replied Morley; "what I have lost is my way, and I meant that I was going to call your husband back to his, when I have lost my own. Thus it was myself I was laughing at, if at any one. But the truth is, having, as I said, lost my way, I am about to ask you for shelter here during the night, as I must have, by the best calculation I can make, some sixteen or seventeen miles, if not more, to ride to my own home."

"Shelter here!" cried the old woman, looking at him eagerly, and even sternly—"what sort of shelter do you expect here, young man? Is this a place to seek shelter, or are we people that can give it?"

"I really do not know," answered Morley Ernstein. "I certainly thought that such a thing was possible, or I should not have asked it; there seems a cottage there ——"

Before the old woman could reply, there came the sound of a horse's feet approaching at a quick pace, and the boy's mother, catching him up in her arms, darted away like lightning towards the spot where she had first been standing when met by Morley Ernstein. She seemed to reach it before the horseman, and Morley could just hear her exclaim—"He is safe, Harry—he is safe!—Wait till I come down to you!—Do not come on, I have something to say."

The horse apparently paused; for two or three minutes no other sound was heard from that quarter; and Morley would have been left to pursue, uninterrupted, his meditations upon the somewhat peculiar position in which he found himself placed, had not the old woman who stood beside him urged him somewhat eagerly to mount his horse and ride away.

"You don't look like a bad man," she said, "and you are certainly a young one, and it's a pity to risk a fresh and happy life for an idle whim. If you had seen as much sorrow as I have, you might very well sport with danger; but now, I tell you fairly, you are hazarding your life for nothing."

"I have seen sorrow enough, my good dame," replied Morley, "to care very little about life; but I believe, as you say, it were better not to risk it. We have no right to do so in this world; God gave it to us for others, as much, if not more, than for ourselves. I will take your advice, then, and go."

Thus saying, he put his foot in the stirrup, mounted, and turned the rein to ride away; but he could not make up his mind to go fast, for the idea of flight from any sort of danger was unpleasant to him. Before he had gone two yards, then, the sound of the other horse's feet was renewed, and a moment after he saw a stout man, mounted on a powerful grey, come round by the road which he himself had followed, and approach at a quick pace towards the fire.

The young Baronet felt that a struggle might be approaching of a somewhat desperate character, and he grasped his riding-whip by the middle, without any sensation of fear, certainly, but with that degree of emotion which every one must experience at the prospect of coming strife. Without taking any apparent notice of the new comer, however, he pursued his way in the direct course, which he had at first taken, and which brought him within about ten yards of the path along which the other was now approaching.

Morley rode on, but as they crossed each other, the child's father drew up his horse, and seemed to gaze at the young Baronet attentively. He then said, "Good night!" to which Morley replied by exactly the same salutation, still riding on. The next instant, however, the other exclaimed—"Holloa! Sir Morley Ernstein! You must give a word to an old acquaintance, after bringing us back the babe!"

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A FORMER ACQUAINTANCE.

THE old and vulgar proverb—that misfortune makes us acquainted with strange bedfellows, is true in more senses than in one; for it not only brings us into contact with persons that we should never otherwise have met, but it makes us seek companionships which nothing else, perhaps, could have produced. To be recognized in such a tone, in such a place, might at any other time have made Morley Ernstein start with some surprise; but now he drew in his horse calmly and deliberately, and turned towards the man who addressed him, very little caring, to say the truth, who was the person, or what was his trade. In the mean while the other approached, and the light of the fire was sufficiently strong where they stood to show Morley a countenance that was familiar to him, but which, for a moment, he could not connect in memory with any particular circumstance or situation.

"Ay, you don't recollect me, sir," said the man; "and you saw me only in a place which I should not think of mentioning anywhere else than where we now stand—nor, indeed, for that matter, should I take the liberty of claiming acquaintance with you here, only it can do you no harm, and I wish to thank you for bringing back the babe."

While he had been speaking, the man's voice led Morley's mind back, by the paths of remembrance, to the point in the past which referred to their first meeting. "I recollect you now, Mr. Martin," he said; "but, to say the truth, we are at such a distance from the spot where we last saw each other, that you took me by surprise. So this was your child I found upon the common. How did it happen to stray so? The poor thing might have perished in such a night as this."

"True, sir—true!" replied Harry Martin, for it was that bold, and somewhat unscrupulous personage with whom Morley now stood face to face. "True, sir—true, the boy might have perished, and with him my only tie to life. No, not my only tie either, for there is my poor girl, Mary, I must think of her a bit, too, though I often fancy she would be better off if I were gone. She would have been better off, sure enough, if she had never known me; but, however, she loves me, and I love her, dear little soul; I know one thing, that if we had lost the babe, it would have broke my heart outright, though I can remember very well the time when I did not care anything about children, and thought they would only be a bother to one; but, somehow, since I had one of my own, I have got very fond of it, and I don't know how it is that fondness has made me think very differently of many other things too. So you see, sir, I am very much obliged to you,—only there is one favour I'll ask of you, which is not just to mention that you have seen me here; for the beaks are after me for a little job I did some time ago, and I think of taking a swim over the herring-pond as a volunteer, for fear, as they say on board the ships, they should make me work my passage to Heaven by pulling at a rope's-end."

"I will certainly not mention it, Martin," replied Morley; "but I should like to hear something more of you. I asked that young woman, who is, I suppose, your wife, and her companion, to give me shelter in the cottage for this night, having got somewhat out of my way, and being, I fancy, some sixteen or seventeen miles from Warmstone Castle."

"Not so far as that, sir," said Harry Martin; "but, nevertheless, you shall be welcome to stay if you like it. I know I can trust you; but the women did not know who you were, and they are in a sad fright about me, poor things! I had left them, for an hour or two, to go and look out for news; but my poor wife could not be satisfied, and as I did not come so soon as she expected, went away to meet me, leaving the boy with his grandmother. The poor old woman was so tired with all our dodging about for the last two or three days, that she fell asleep by the fire, and the boy

strayed after a will-o-the-wisp, or something of that kind, I suppose. But come, Sir Morley, if you like to stay with us, we will do the best we can for you, though what you call a cottage is but a hovel, and that the two women must have."

"I will stay by your fire, Martin," said Morley, dismounting and leading his horse back; and in a few minutes more, after some formalities and introductions of a particular kind, he was seated in what may be called Harry Martin's domestic circle, and in full conversation with him, his wife, and mother-in-law.

He perceived that the elder woman looked at him hard from time to time, and at length she said—"I was stupid not to know you, Sir Morley, for you are so like your father. There is something of your mother, too, about the eyes, but you are more like your father."

"I suppose you knew my father well, then?" answered Morley, looking at her steadfastly, in order to see whether he could trace in her worn, but still fine features, the countenance of any of the dependents of his family whom he had known in youth. It was in vain that he did so, however; the face of the old woman was quite unknown to him, as her reply soon showed him that it must be.

"Ay, I did know him well," replied the old woman, "and a good man he was. I wish I had always followed what he told me. It is now about eighteen years since I saw him, and then he said, very truly, that those who seek riches by wrong means, are sure to find poverty straight on their road."

"I certainly am sorry that you did not take his advice," said Morley; "but I trust you were led to do nothing very wrong in opposition to his counsel."

"Tut, nonsense, granny!" cried Harry Martin; "you are doting with your old stories. What wrong did you ever do, if it was not letting me marry your daughter? You were as good an old body as ever lived, and as thriving a one, too, after you came back from India, till both mother and daughter, I believe, fell in love with a scapegrace like myself."

"I did not fall in love with you, Harry," replied the old woman; "but I thought you better than you seemed, and, to say the truth, better than you are. You were frank and free; I believed you would be kind to my poor girl, and, to do you but justice, you have been so. But what I am talking about is many years ago; she was then a babe, not so big as little Harry here, and I was the wife of Serjeant More, a good man and a kind, but somewhat too fond of money withal. Ay, it was a bad business, that; but it is of no use thinking of it now. I have not been in those parts, sir," she continued, "since I came back to England, and I should like much to hear of all the people there. Your father is dead, sir, I know; pray, how is your mother? She was a beautiful creature!"

"Alas!" replied Morley, "she has been long dead, too."

"Well-a-day!" exclaimed the old woman, and then, after a pause, she asked—"and Mr. Sanderstead's family, sir—how are they? He was just married then."

"He has now eight or nine daughters, I believe," answered Morley; "I know the room was full of them when I called there one morning."

"Ay," said the old woman, abstractedly, "and what has become of Lawyer Carr and his wife?"

Morley shrunk, as if a rude hand had been laid upon a fresh wound, but he replied, after a moment's hesitation—"The old man is still living, but his wife has been dead, I find, for some years."

"Dead!—dead!" cried the old woman; "and is the child living—the daughter?"

"Yes, she is," replied Morley, rising—"she is living—Martin, I think I shall go on."

"Why, what's the matter, sir?" said Harry Martin, gazing on the young Baronet's face; "a minute ago you were all for staying, and now you must be gone."

"I am, perhaps, whimsical," replied Morley Ernstein; "I have become so lately. However, before I go, let me speak a word or two with you on your own affairs. You talk of going to America, if I understood you rightly. I do not wish to hear why, or anything about it—I can guess, perhaps; but two women and a child must be a burden to you under such circumstances. If they like to come up to Warmstone, while you make your escape, there is a vacant cottage, I hear, from my agent, which they can have, till they go to join you. Some furniture can be sent down from the Castle, and if you think fit, I will give full orders before I leave Warmstone, for I shall not be there more than a day."

Harry Martin had risen while Morley was speaking, and was gazing in his face, with an expression in which doubt and suspicion seemed to mingle with satisfaction. "I don't think you would play me a trick, sir," he said, as Morley concluded, "and yet it's strange enough, your starting up in that way the moment the old woman mentioned Lawyer Carr!"

Morley returned his gaze with a look of unmixed surprise. "I don't understand what you mean," he answered; "what have you to do with Lawyer Carr? or Lawyer Carr to do with you?"

"Everything in the world," cried Harry Martin, knitting his brows, and stamping his foot—"everything in the world—don't you know that?"

It was the old woman who now replied, for she seemed now the most astonished of the party, and catching Martin by the arm, she asked—"Is it old Carr, then, that you are afraid of? He had better not touch a hair of your head!"

"Nonsense—nonsense, granny!" said the man; "you don't understand what you are talking about. But I see Sir Morley has not heard of the job. Sir, I'm very much obliged to you for your offer, and won't say No, but will just talk to my wife about it after you are gone, if it would not be too much trouble for you to give the orders upon the chance."

"I will not fail to have the place put in order," replied Morley; "and you may be sure that if they do come, they shall be well taken care of. As for yourself, Martin, I can offer you nothing. If, however, you are in want of money, all that I have about me is at your service."

"Thank you, sir," said Martin, with a light laugh at the double meaning of that which was about to spring from his lips; "I am very much obliged to you, but I do not want your money, or I would have taken it, I can assure you.—Though that is not true either," he added; "I might have taken a stranger's, but not yours, Sir Morley; but the fact is, I don't want money."

"Of that I am very happy," answered Morley; "but I cannot help expressing a regret, Martin, that you should adhere to a course so dangerous as well as so evil. I thought, when first I saw you, and think still, that you were intended for better things, and might distinguish yourself, and raise yourself high in a good and honourable course."

The man he spoke to cast down his eyes, and gazed musingly upon the ground for several minutes, but he then replied—"Thank you, sir, for your good opinion; but it's all nonsense talking or thinking of such things now—it's too late in the day to mend. The worst of the laws of this country, and of what people call society, is, that they never allow any man to get better. A man may get worse in this world every day, if he likes it; the bad road is always open before him, and plenty there are to drive him on upon it. But if he tries to go back again, sir, to the good road that he has left, there is sure to be some one to bang the turnpike in his face, and stop him ere he has got half a mile. I cannot help thinking, sir, that it is a pity those men who set about making laws and customs, do not recollect that there is such a thing as amending as well as punishing. I believe it would be better for all of us if they did."

"There is some truth in what you say," replied Morley, "that our laws and our customs, in dealing both with man and woman, seem to lose sight altogether of the great object of reformation. Terror is the only instrument we use, and terror never yet reclaimed. Nevertheless, though the path back, Martin, must always be more difficult and laborious than the path onward, still I believe it may be trodden, if a man have a strong heart and a good resolution; and I trust that, when you have made your escape to another country, and are out of danger altogether, you will think of what we have been saying to-night, and will see whether, in a new world, you cannot live a new life."

"On my soul and honour I will, sir!" replied the man, eagerly. "I'll do my best, at all events. I'll tell you what it is, Sir Morley Ernstein—the thing that ruins half of us is want of hope. The least little bit of hope would very often lead on a man to do much better, but we don't get it, sir. Once we have done amiss, as the world goes now, there's no object in stopping. However, sir, I have had some encouragement, and, as I said just now, I'll do my best, if I can contrive to get off this time."

"I trust you may do both," replied Morley, "my good friend, for I believe that you are not without good feelings, if they were well directed. But I will now go on, and before to-morrow night the cottage shall be all ready for your wife and her mother."

"Stay a bit, sir," said Harry Martin; "I'll walk up with you beyond the pitmen's hovels. They are somewhat of a wild set, and some of them may be stirring yet."

Morley threw the rein of his horse over his arm, and walked on with Harry Martin by his side. Most men would have considered it not the safest sort of companionship in the world; but no idea of danger to himself crossed the young Baronet's mind, and his thoughts, to say the truth, were busy in a struggle which every one must have endured who has felt for his fellow-creatures.

Harry Martin spoke—"Pray, Sir Morley," he said, "can you tell me what has become of that young scamp, William Barham? I saw him after he escaped from being drowned—which he never will be, if there's truth in the old proverb—for he is as bad a youth as ever lived or died unhanged. He partly put me up to this last job, and then, when it was done, sneaked out of the way somewhere, and I never could get sight of him afterwards."

The recollection of the last time he had seen William Barham was, as the reader may suppose, agitating to Morley Ernstein. He paused for a moment, indeed, ere he replied; but he then answered calmly enough—"Not many days ago, he was staying at the house of Mr. Carr, at Yelverly."

"Ha!" replied his companion; "the young villain's betraying me; he is fit to sell his own soul, though it is not worth buying if he did; but he had better take care what he is about, or I will break his neck for him."

"Do nothing rashly, Martin," replied Morley Ernstein; "he is, I believe, bad enough; but I have a faint recollection of having heard that some connection or other has been discovered between him and Mr. Carr—some relationship or friendship between their parents—I forget what; but, certainly, it had no reference to you."

"I trust it has not," replied Martin, in the same stern tone with which he had before spoken; but he still seemed dissatisfied, and continued to walk by Morley's side in silence, till they had passed a long row of lowbuilt cottages, and had gone on for about half a mile on the moor. At length he paused, and pointing on the road before him, he said—"That is your way, sir. About a mile on you will find a finger-post, with two roads separating to the right and left; take the left-hand road, and follow it till you come to a village, where you must get further directions. Good night, sir!"

Morley wished him good night, and was about to proceed, but he thought he perceived a degree of hesitation in the man's manner, which made him pause for a moment. "You seem to have something more to tell me, Martin," he said; "speak without reserve, if you have."

"Why, there is a word or two, sir," replied Harry Martin, approaching close to his horse's side, and speaking in a low tone. "If things go right with me, and I get away, it's all well and good; but you know, sir, matters may go another way, and then the game's up. As for dying, I declare, I care no more about it, than about going to sleep; but you see, sir, there's my poor wife—she is as good a girl as ever

lived, and I don't know how or why it is, but since we were married it has made a great difference in me. I am not half so wild as I was before; and I have got a sort of tenderness, if I may call it so, towards all women for her sake. You see, sir, she has never been used to hard work, but has been brought up as a sort of a lady, and if I were gone, what would become of her? I think, if I knew she would be well taken care of, I should not care for anything in life."

"Make your mind easy," said Morley, "though I cannot exactly say what I should be able to do for her under such circumstances; I will promise you to see her established in some honest way of life—some small school, or other thing, that does not imply any severe exertion."

The man made no answer, but he grasped the young Baronet's hand tight, in a way that was not to be mistaken, and thus they parted.

CHAPTER XXXV.

WARMSTONE CASTLE.

MORLEY ERNSTEIN rode on more slowly than during the former part of his journey. His mood was changed, another spirit had come over him. It was no longer the rash and reckless vehemence of bitter, perhaps we might call it angry, disappointment, that tenanted his bosom; but it was the dark, sad listlessness of a heart which has given up all expectation for itself, and only lives faintly in its sympathies with others. If ever the poet's words were made true, it was in his case, for "black care did, indeed, sit behind the horseman," and was his only companion by the way. His mind rested frequently, it is true, upon the fate and character of the man he had just left, but it was with a vague, careless, indistinctness of thought, very, very different from the keen and eager scrutiny which he gave to every phase of human life, in former times.

Thus musing, he wended on his way, his journey being much like the life he contemplated—dull, gloomy, dark, and long; but yet, mile after mile, slipping away he scarcely knew how. At length, he saw a faint redness in the sky before him, but took little notice, thinking that it was occasioned by another of the waste coal-fires. It grew redder and redder, however, and touches of warm yellow began to brighten the edges of the clouds—

"Can it be morning already?" he said; but the clear grey which took place of the blackness of night, soon showed him, that another day had indeed begun.

A little more than an hour after dawn brought him to a bridge over a small stream, but he made his horse pass through the water, and suffered it to pause to drink. As he did so he gazed around him, and his eyes rested upon a scene strongly characteristic of that part of the country.

From the edge of the river stretched up a small field full of ripe corn, which, notwithstanding the advanced period of the year, had not yet felt the sickle. Beyond, the land rose, swelling gradually into a considerable hill, about half way up which appeared an old grey stone mansion, with a wide sort of park before it, spreading down to the edge of the cornfield, and covered with short grass.

Morley did not in the least recollect the mansion, for he had not seen it since he was an infant; but, nevertheless, from the descriptions which he had heard, he instantly recognized the house he was in search of; and, finding his way to a gate, he entered the park, and was soon in the court-yard of his own dwelling.

Servants had gone down before him; everything had been prepared for his reception; the place looked as gay and bright as it was possible to make it; and the time had been, not long before, when Morley would have walked well pleased through the long wainscoted corridors and quaint old rooms,—would have enjoyed that calm look of the past which ancient houses have about them. Now, however, he walked straight to the old drawing-room, without looking either to the right or left, and cast himself down in a chair, each new thing which the hopes of the past had linked to happiness in the future, producing nothing but bitter pain, now that the golden chain was broken by the hand of disappointment.

His old servant, Adam Gray, had followed him, and marked his haggard eye and faded cheek with pain. He sought for no explanation, however—he wanted none; for, with the instinct of old affection, he had divined the grand cause of the sorrow he beheld, and cared little for the minor particulars. It was wonderful, too, how accurately the old man guessed the course which grief and disappointment would take with his master's mind.

"I am afraid, sir," he said, "that you have been up all night. Had you not better lie down for an hour or two? Your room is quite ready, for we expected you last night, and I waited up till two o'clock, thinking you might come."

"I should not sleep, Adam," replied Morley; "and it is as well to remain awake where I am—where there are things to employ the eyes upon—as to shut out everything but thought, which is not pleasant to me just now, good Adam. Let me have some coffee, my good friend, and afterwards I will walk round the place with you, for I have something to give you in charge, Adam. You must see to it yourself, after I am gone away."

"Gone away, sir!" exclaimed the old man; "I hope you don't intend to go very soon. There is a great deal to be done here, sir—a great deal that would amuse and please you, I am sure."

"It must be done by others," answered Morley, sadly; "I shall return to Morley Court tomorrow morning. There I shall stay but a day or two ere I set out for London. From London I shall most likely go to the Continent; but I have not fixed upon any plan yet. Get me the coffee, Adam."

The old man brought him the coffee, then, in silence; he laid out the breakfast-table with care; he found a thousand little excuses for lingering in the room; and he watched his

master's countenance, with that sort of anxious but humble attachment, which is rarely to be found anywhere but in an old servant or a faithful dog. At length, he ventured to say, in a low tone, as if it were more an involuntary observation he was making for his own relief, than intended for the ear of the young Baronet —"Well, I did not think Miss Juliet would have done so!"

Morley raised his finger sternly, with a knitted brow, but he only said—"Leave me!" and the old man, seeing that a touch upon the wound was agony, quitted the drawing-room, sorry for the words that he had uttered.

As soon as he was gone, Morley Ernstein rose from his seat, and, with his hands clasped together, and his eyes cast down, strode up and down for several minutes, in bitter meditations. Hitherto the feelings of heart-broken disappointment—disappointment of the best and brightest hopes of his existence—the crushing of the sweetest, the tenderest, the most elevating sensations of his heart, had been unmingled with any other passion. It had been alone deep sorrow—despair, if one will—but now the words of the old servant threw in a new ingredient.

He felt himself an object of compassion, and he loved not to be so. There was a feeling of being lowered, degraded, in knowing that his misery had been observed and pitied; and he muttered to himself—"This must not be; I shall have my tale of disappointment sent over all the world. I shall be called love-sick, broken-hearted; I shall be laughed at by unfeeling puppies, commiserated by sentimental girls, and scorned by the cold and calculating, who know nothing of life but its material things. Though she has contrived to make my existence desolate, and to chill the warm fountain of my heart's blood into ice, yet I must not suffer myself to become an object of contempt or neglect. I must move and act in this world as if it still had matters of interest for me."

Morley Ernstein sat down, drank some of the coffee, more to show that he had used the breakfast things set down before him than from appetite, and then rang for his old servant. It was another, however, who now appeared, and Morley had to send for Adam Gray, not indeed with the intention of referring at all to the stern answer he had given, or to anything which had passed, but merely to evince towards him that kindness and confidence which he knew would be the best atonement for any harshness.

"Now, Adam," he said, in a tone not cheerful indeed, but less gloomy than before, "show me which is my dressing-room, and while I shave and change my clothes, you shall give me some account of all the wonders of Warmstone. Then you shall take a walk with me round the place, and we will talk of the disposal of one or two of the cottages that are vacant."

The old man was well pleased; and, standing by his master's side, while he dressed and refreshed himself after his long night's ride, Adam Gray, with some degree of loquacity, which, though not inseparable from age, is its very frequent companion, proceeded to relate and comment upon a thousand little particulars which he had remarked since his arrival at Warmstone three or four days before.

At length his toilet was concluded, and, taking his hat and gloves, he sauntered forth, followed by the old servant, half a step behind. It was a pleasant, but somewhat cold day, for the time of year, and strange were the sensations of the young gentleman as he strolled forward over the short turf, gilded by the autumnal sunshine, with the woods just beginning to grow brown upon their edges, resting calm in the tranquil noontide, and an antique solitude of aspect spread over the whole place. Guided through the tall oaks and beeches on the right, Adam Gray led him to the old pleasure-grounds of the castle, where high walls of thick black yew, trimmed with the utmost neatness, flanked broad gravel walks, and protected from the wind various formal beds of flowers, which, though well kept, and not selected amiss, were showing a good deal the hand of autumn.

From the garden, Morley and his old servant proceeded across the park to the little village which lay upon the property at the distance of about a mile from the house. Morley walked through it, spoke to the different cottagers, inquired into their situation, gave some directions regarding them, and then told Adam Gray to take him to the two small houses which he had said were untenanted. The old man then led him back upon the road towards Warmstone Castle, but turning, soon after, up a broad, well-kept path by the side of the stream, he conducted his master into a little glen, at the end of which might be seen a small water-mill. Some way further down, however, between the mouth of the glen and the mill, were two pretty stone cottages joined together, with a little sweep of the hill behind them, and a garden in the front coming down to the path.

"You seem to know this place well, Adam," said Morley, "though you cannot have been much here."

"Oh, bless you! yes, sir," replied the man. "In your father's time we used to spend four or five months at Warmstone every year, and as it was his particular wish that it should be well kept up, Mr. Hamilton has sent me over once or twice a year since."

Morley made no reply, but walked on with the melancholy feeling of the passing away of all things more strong upon him than ever.

He stopped opposite the gate of the cottage garden, while the old man went in and opened the doors and windows. Morley then shook off the load of thought, and looked round the place, examining the different rooms, and seeing that all was in a state of good repair. Although a place destined to be the scene of busy life always looks somewhat melancholy when vacant, there was an air of comfort about the cottage which satisfied the young Baronet, and turning to Adam Gray, he said—"You must stay here a day or two, Adam, after I have gone to town. Have a sufficient quantity of furniture, of a suitable kind, brought down here from the castle, and let the garden be put in somewhat better order. Probably to-morrow, or the next day, you will have an application about the cottage from some

people whom I have promised to let it to rent free—a respectable-looking old woman and her daughter, a younger one, with a little boy, her child. The younger woman—and, indeed, both—have been in a better situation. You will therefore do everything to make them comfortable."

The old man gazed in his master's face for a moment, without reply; but then inquired—"May I ask what is the old lady's name, Sir Morley? for a great many old ladies might come, you know."

"That is not likely," replied Morley; "but I have almost forgotten her name, my good Adam, though it is one, I believe, you ought to know, for she lived near Morley Court, in my father's time. Oh, I remember now!—her name is More, the widow of Serjeant More."

The old man's face changed in a moment—"The wife of Serjeant More come back again!" he exclaimed. "We all heard that she had died in India. Ha! I shall like to have a chat with her, of old times. Every one said she was a very good woman—too good a woman to do a wicked thing—but yet people did suspect that she did one thing which was not quite right——"

"Well, my good Adam," said Morley, interrupting him, "the scandals of the past have, doubtless, more interest for you than for me. You will have plenty of time to hold any conversation you like with the old lady, for I shall not want you in town till to-morrow week. In the mean time, however, you must give directions for taking care of the horses, and see that everything be put in good order, both at Morley Court and here, for I am going to the Continent, good Adam, and shall most likely be absent many months."

"I hope you are not going without me, sir," exclaimed the old man. "I would fain go with you, if you please; for if you leave me behind, I shall take a sad fancy that I shall never see you again."

"It shall be as you like, Adam," replied Morley. "It is the custom, my good old friend, on these occasions, to take with one a personage who, according to the law of fashion, must not be one's own countryman, nor have one single tie to the master whom he serves. His business is, to pay postmasters and postilions more than they ought to have, to aid the landlords of inns, and the officers of Custom-houses, the cicerone and the waiter in plundering his employer to the best of his abilities, to run away from him in case of danger, and to appropriate such parts of his goods and chattels, in case of sickness or death, as may be most easily secreted. This personage is called a courier; and as I go, you know, in the quality of an English gentleman of fashion, such a piece of roguery is, of course, a necessary appendage to my travelling carriage. You may go with me too, however, if you like. You must even let him cheat me according to the best esteemed mode, till I find him out myself in something too gross, and then——"

"What will you do then, sir?" demanded Adam Gray, in a quiet tone.

"Throw him out of the window," answered Morley.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

DAME MORE.

We must pass over the space of two days, having now to dwell for some time upon the fate and history of persons in a very different station of life and of a very different character from Sir Morley Ernstein.

To the cottage, then, we must turn, on the evening of the second day after that on which Sir Morley Ernstein had visited it; premising that the young Baronet had set off for London on the day after we last saw him. The little tenement had undergone a considerable change, and though it may seem strange to attribute anything like poetry to tables and chairs, yet I must say there was the poetry of comfort about it—ay, dear reader, there is a poetry in anything which calls up before the eye of imagination all the sweet relationships of domestic life.

At the moment that we speak of, the elder woman, whom the little boy himself has introduced to us by the name of Granny, was seated in the arm-chair by the fire, and looking round with a feeling of relief and satisfaction, though her face was somewhat worn with the anxiety and watching which she had undergone during the last week, and with being hunted, as she expressed it, like a wild beast, over the moors. The boy, her grandson, was on the floor near her feet, rolling to and fro a large round mass of wood, which was used to keep the cottage-door open in fine weather; while his mother was gazing down upon him with a look of sorrowful affection; and in her eyes might be read deep and sad comments upon the fate of her child, upon human love, and human errors.

The two women had been in the house for several hours, but had been busily engaged in arranging all things in their future abode, so that this was the first moment that leisure had been found for calm contemplation. Neither mother nor daughter spoke for some time, and nothing was heard but the ticking of the clock behind the door, and the rolling to and fro of the wooden ball by the little boy. Suddenly, however, there was a footfall in the garden, and the younger woman started and listened, but the moment after she shook her head, saying—"It is not he."

The well-known music of the step we love, the sweetest of all sounds to those who have been long absent from the arms of affection, was not there. It was the slow and heavy tread of an old man, and in another minute, after tapping at the door, good Adam Gray entered the cottage and approached the fire. He had not thought fit to be present when the little party took possession of their new dwelling; but he now came, both to see that his young master's orders had been executed, and to satisfy, in some degree, his own curiosity upon more than one point.

The younger woman had said—"Come in!" and her mother had turned round to see who it was that entered, but the eye of the latter rested upon the form of the old butler without the slightest sign of recognition. He gazed

upon her in return as he advanced; but whether it was that his memory was better, or that she was less changed by time than he was, it was very evident, from the expression of his countenance, that he saw in her an old acquaintance.

"Good evening," he said—"good evening I hope you find everything comfortable here. It was my young master's strict orders that I should do everything to make you so."

"I thank you, sir," replied the younger woman, with a tone and manner that would not have disgraced any society, "we are deeply indebted to Sir Morley Ernstein, and have found everything far more comfortable than we could even hope, certainly far more than we had any right to expect."

"I am glad to hear it," said good Adam Gray. "But by your leave, ma'am, I will take a chair. I have come here as an old friend, Mrs. More; do you not recollect me? Do you not recollect Adam Gray?"

The old woman looked in his face with some surprise—"And are you Mr. Gray, the butler?" she asked. "Why, your hair used to be as black as jet, and you seemed to me taller by a couple of inches."

"Ay," answered old Adam, "'tis very true, good dame—'tis very true indeed; but time, you know, will whiten the hair and bow the body, and I do not stand near so tall as I once did. Good lack! when I look in the looking-glass, I can scarcely recollect what I was like twenty years ago. You are much changed, too, Dame More, though not so much as I am, I think. You were a buxom woman in those days, and we were all sorry when you left the village, though some said it was for your own good; but others shook the head, you know, Dame More."

"Well they might," said the old woman, in a low, sad tone, fixing her eyes upon the fire—"well they might, indeed!"

Adam Gray and his old acquaintance sat silent for several minutes, evidently engaged in meditations over the past; and the younger woman laid hold of the arm of her little boy, who was staring inquisitively in the face of the stranger, saying—"Come, Dick, it is time for you to go to bed, boy, and rest your young limbs."

The child went away willingly enough, and the old man and woman were left alone.

"Well, Mrs. More," said Adam Gray, "I am glad that we have met once again in life, though I suppose you will be as silent about all the stories of those days as you were when last I saw you."

"I don't know that," answered the old woman, musing; "times have changed, Mr. Gray, and I may not care to talk about things now that I did not choose to talk about then. Sir Morley Ernstein has been kind to me too——"

"And I am sure so was his father," said the butler.

"Yes," replied she, "so he was; but, as I have said, times have changed, and those who were then befriending me and mine, may now be persecuting us. However, I shall say nothing till I see what comes of it."

"I should like very much, however, to hear all that story," rejoined Adam Gray, "and I am sure I would not say a word to any one. It is only for my own satisfaction I speak, and to know if my good master was right or wrong in what he said."

The old woman gazed for an instant down upon the ground, then turned her eyes upon the old man with a very strange expression, saying—"He was wrong, Mr. Gray; and I told him what was true. Yet, odd as it may seem, he was right too, and I deceived him. I will tell you what, you were always a good-hearted man, and a sensible one, and some day or another I'll tell you the whole story, but it shan't be now."

"It must be very soon, then," said Adam Gray, "for I am going to London in two days, and to the Continent immediately after."

"That will do!" cried the old woman—"that will do quite well."

"Do you mean when I come back again?" demanded Adam Gray. "Who can tell, good dame, when that may be? Who can tell whether it ever will be?"

"I don't mean that," said the old woman, somewhat peevishly, "but I mean that you are not likely to tell it again till I am dead and buried, and then you may tell it if you like; so you shall hear all before you go, if you will promise to keep it a secret, as I have done, till I be gone to join my husband and my son."

"Why, where are they?" asked Adam Gray. "I thought you were a widow, Dame More. Did you leave your husband and your son in India?"

"Yes," replied the old woman, fixing her eyes upon the fire—"I left them in the grave."

The good old servant seemed somewhat shocked that he had called up such painful memories, and after remaining silent for a short time, Dame More, as he called her, went on—"Mr. Gray," she said, "if you will come to me to-morrow, I will tell you all, for I do wish some one person to know the thing besides myself. Your master is too young, or I would have told him; and Harry, my girl's husband, is too wild, and not to be trusted; and if I told Jane herself, she would never keep it from her husband; so I will tell you, because I believe you have always been an honest man—I should like to know that Harry gets safe away first, however, for if that man persecutes him, I will stop him, or have vengeance."

"Vengeance!" observed the old man—"vengeance, my good dame, is like a sword without a hilt, sure to cut the hands of those that use it."

"It may be so, Mr. Gray," replied the old woman—"it may be so, indeed, but I must save him, for my poor girl's sake."

"I do not exactly understand what you mean," said Adam Gray. But the old woman shook her head, replying, "You had better not. However, I will tell you at all events, for it is fit that some one should know. Life is uncertain at the best, and at my years it's but like the dying flame of a candle, flickering up and down before it goes out for ever.—Come, you shall hear the story now," she continued; "but first let me go and tell the girl not to come down. Poor Jane! she has enough sad secrets of her own without having to bear mine too."

The old woman rose from her chair, supporting herself by the arm, for she seemed somewhat stiff, and was turning towards the door which led to the staircase, when her daughter's step was heard descending quickly, and Jane Martin entered with an eager look, saying—"He is there—he is there! I heard his step in the garden. I am sure he is there!" and as she spoke, she turned her eyes with an apprehensive glance from the countenance of her mother to that of Adam Gray.

"You may trust him!" cried the old woman. "Open the door, Jane, and see. Do not be afraid, girl—you may trust him, I say."

The younger woman approached the door with a quiet and noiseless step, and lifting the latch, looked out. A quick and eager respiration was all that was heard, but the moment she had opened the door, she darted out, and returned the instant after, with her fair slight form clasped round by the powerful arm of her husband.

The eyes of Harry Martin rested at once upon Adam Gray, as he sat by the fire, but it was with no expression of apprehension, and he answered some words which his wife whispered rapidly to him, by saying—"I understand—I understand, Jane."

Adam Gray, however, saw at once that there was something more in the situation of the parties than had been communicated to him by his master; and, being a prudent and sagacious man, though not without his share of curiosity, he rose after a few brief words had passed between him and the rest, and took his leave, promising to return on the following day, and have a further chat with Mrs. More.

The night was somewhat dark as the old butler issued forth, and, accustomed as his eyes had lately been to the light within the cottage, he could scarcely see his way along the narrow gravel foot-path which led from the door to the end of the little garden. When he reached the low gate, however, a sudden light, proceeding from some object which he could not distinguish, came in his face and nearly blinded him, but the moment after, it ceased, and he caught the faint outline of a man standing close by the palings.

The appearance of this personage, who seemed to have a dark lantern with him, was not at all satisfactory to good Adam Gray, but judging that civility would be the best policy, he merely said, "Good night," and passed through the gate. His friend with a lantern made no reply, and Adam hurried down the little path which led towards the mansion-house, not by any means sure that certain notes, together with sundry round pieces of gold and silver, which at that moment tenanted his breeches-pocket, would be permitted to remain in occupation till he reached Warmstone Castle.

On arriving at the high road, however, he saw another man advancing rapidly towards him, but bearing in no degree the aspect of a person of that neighbourhood. The stranger stopped exactly opposite to him, but seemed more inclined to examine than to annoy him, and suffered him to pass on, replying, "Good night," to Adam's salutation, in a civil tone, but without any Northumbrian accent. The sight of a post-chaise, standing in the road at some distance, put an end to the good old man's apprehensions, though it did not clear up the mystery; but wisely judging that the affair was no business of his, he made the best of his way back to the castle, without taking any further notice, or inquiring into things that did not concern him.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

TAKEN.

It was nearly twelve o'clock at night, and Harry Martin stood with his wife, gazing down upon their sleeping child. Curious as are all the contrasts which life presents, there are few more extraordinary, more full of deep and strange interest than the contrast between the vices and strong passions of unbridled manhood, and the calm reproachful innocence of infancy. The bold, reckless man who stood there and gazed, felt a deep strain of solemn sensations, mingling with the feelings of paternal love, which the sight of his child called forth. But he asked himself not why or how it was that he experienced a sorrowful emotion totally distinct from the idea of parting from the beloved, as he gazed down upon the sleeping boy—an emotion which, if he had investigated all the causes, he would have found to be the voice of memory reproaching him for the innocence he had cast away.

"Well, Jane," he said, at length, "it is no use lingering—I must go. It would have been wiser, perhaps, not to come, but I could not go without seeing you again, my dear girl. Six hours now will bring me to the coast, and then the lugger the man talked of will soon take me to Liverpool, and the 'Mary Anne' sails on Saturday morning; so I shall soon be on my way to another far country, and you must follow as soon as may be—Hark! I thought your mother was gone to bed!"

"It is only the kitchen window," said his wife; "it makes that noise when the wind shakes it."

"You are sure that you have money enough for all that you want?" continued her husband.

"Quite sure," she answered; "more than enough, Harry. You know I have not been accustomed to such extravagance as you have taught me. I can do upon very little, and the passage-money I will put by and keep, without——"

"Hark!" he exclaimed, grasping her arm, and looking with a wild and eager gaze towards the door. "There is certainly some one below."

Jane turned as pale as death, for she distinctly heard a step, but she lost not her courage—her husband's life was at stake, and the resolute spirit of deep love rose up within her.

"Out, through that room behind," she said; "the window is not high; then up the side of the hill, there are woods and moors. I will go down and stop them. Away, Harry, away!" and printing one kiss upon his cheek, she darted towards the staircase, and ran down, exclaiming,

in a tone of alarm that needed no affectation to assume—"Who is there?—There is surely some one in the house! Mother, mother!" she was heard to exclaim aloud; "here are strange men in the house! Who are you?—what do you want here?"

"It's no use talking, ma'am," said a voice the moment after, proceeding from a stout, thickset personage, who stood in the middle of the kitchen floor, while another man was thrusting himself through the lattice window. "We want just to say a word or two to Mr. Martin, and we must say it, too. He knows that the game's up well enough, so it's no use dodging about in this way."

The wife, however, continued to stand in the doorway that led to the stairs, calling out aloud, "Mother! mother!"

Even as she spoke, there were the sounds of a window thrown open above, a leap, and steps running over the greensward; and Jane, giving a wild scream, fell forward upon the floor.

The officer, for such the person was whom she found in the occupation of the kitchen below, sprang over her, and rushed up-stairs; old Mrs. More came down in her night-gear, and raised her daughter fainting from the floor; and the other officer, who had been scrambling in by the window, made his exit by the door, and ran round to the back of the house. Numerous cries, shouts, and directions, were then heard, vociferated by the man above, who at length leaped out of the window himself, and seemingly took his way over the hill. Comparative silence succeeded, though voices, shouting to each other, were still heard faintly, and Jane was raising her head in her mother's arms, and inquiring—"Is he safe?" when the distant report of a pistol came upon the wind, then some fresh calling; and then all was silent. Jane and the old woman listened with eager and beating hearts, but not a sound more reached them to give them any satisfaction. At length, the child in the room above, disturbed in its sleep by all that had taken place, began to cry aloud, and the half-distracted mother ran up to soothe it.

Still no further sound broke upon the anxious ear from the hill-side, and hour after hour passed by without tale or tidings. Jane lay down upon her bed towards the morning, and wept with fear and agitation, but she slept not. At length the grey dawn appeared, and she rose to go forth and see if she could gather anything to calm her anxiety, from the appearance of the footsteps on the hill-side. At the door, however, she was met by one of the men whom she had seen the night before. He had a dogged, sullen look, which she thought might proceed from disappointment, and that itself was a relief to her; but when he said, in a civil tone—"Good morning, ma'am, I have come to search the house," the poor girl could have embraced him, for she misconstrued his words, and imagined that he was still in pursuit of her husband.

"You may search as much as you please," she said, with a lightened heart; "you will find nobody here."

"As to nobody," replied the officer, "I suppose you are right, ma'am; but it's not body, but thing I'm looking for. We've got his body safe enough."

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Jane, nearly sinking to the earth, while a new terror took possession of her heart. "His body!—you have not killed him?"

"Oh, no, no!" cried the officer; "he's safe and hearty, ma'am, don't be afraid. I was only speaking as the lawyers do. We caught him in the wood over the hill there, and we shall soon have his body into court, for the assizes are just coming on, you know, and he's gone over to Doncaster in a shay, which we had all ready for him, quite like a gentleman, I can assure you. These foolish country constables would never have caught him. They can deal with a stray thief, or a horse-stealer, or any of your petty-larceny rogues, as the gentleman says in the play; but they don't know how to manage a regular professional man at all. So it is lucky for Mr. Martin, too, that they had us down from London, for he'll be treated quite politely, you may be sure. Howsoever, I must just go in and search the house, ma'am, for some of the things may be here, you know."

This long oration had fallen upon the ears of Jane like her husband's knell of death, and retreating into the cottage kitchen, she sank down on a chair, letting the man proceed with his search as he would. That search disturbed, as a natural consequence, the mother of the unfortunate wife; and while the poor girl sat by herself, with her head drooping and her hands clasped on her knee, the image of disconsolate bereavement, she heard Dame More's voice in eager conversation with the officer, and at length distinguished the words—"I will prove him innocent. Do not you be so confident, for you shall hear another story at the trial."

"What, you will prove an alibi, my good woman?" said the officer, in a sneering tone; "but that's an old go—it won't do this time. Juries are getting accustomed to alibis; they don't answer now; or, mayhap, you committed the burglary yourself, and, if so, you had better come along with me to Doncaster."

"I did not commit it myself," replied the old woman, in a stern tone—"I did not commit it myself, nor can you prove that he committed it."

"Come, come," said the officer—"this is all gammon. What's in this box, old lady? that's what we want to see at present."

"Search, and you will see," answered Mrs. More. "We have nothing to conceal from you here!"

"That's coming it strong, howsoever," replied the man; and, leaving him to pursue his search as he pleased, the old lady descended to comfort her daughter.

"Don't be afraid, Jane," she said—"don't be afraid; they shall do nothing to him. It were worth as much as that old miser's life, to hurt a hair of his head. Don't be afraid, Jane, but put on your bonnet, my girl, run up to the castle, and tell the old man Gray to come down and speak to me. I might die, or some accident might happen, so I had better see him before I set out."

With trembling hands—but little reassured by

what her mother said, and, unfortunately, but too certain of her husband's guilt—the poor girl put on her bonnet, and hastened, as fast as her limbs would carry her, up to Warmstone Castle. Before she returned again with Adam Gray, after about half-an-hour's absence, the officer had completed his search, and had left the house, swearing, with an oath, that it was very strange he had been able to discover nothing bearing in the least degree upon the robbery which had been committed. Jane found her mother putting on the boy's clothes, and, taking him out of the old lady's hands, she left her to speak with Adam Gray alone. On coming down again, both the child and herself were completely dressed, as if to go upon a journey; and the eagerness of her look amounted almost to wildness, as, in answer to her mother's question of where she was going, she replied—"You know I must get to Doncaster as fast as I can, that I may be with him. Think of his being in prison, mother, and alone!"

"Nay, nay, Jane," replied her mother—"stay a bit, my girl—they would not let you be with him even if you were there; but this good gentleman, Mr. Gray, says he will take us all over in the chaise, with which he is going to drive back to Morley Court to-morrow. It will be a sad thing for me to see all those places again; but never mind, I will go."

"I cannot stay till to-morrow," cried the younger woman. "I would rather walk, mother—indeed I would. My heart will break if I do not go to him directly;" and she burst into tears.

Adam Gray, in the mean while, had stood with his eyes fixed upon the floor, musing deeply, as if some subject of extraordinary interest occupied him altogether. His ear had heard all that had passed, but his mind was so fully engaged with the conversation which had taken place between him and Mrs. More, that he had not given any attention to what was passing, till the tears of the young woman roused him from his reverie, and then the ear conveyed to his mind all that it had collected.

"There is no use," he said, addressing Jane, "of your trying to go on foot. You do not know what a distance it is, and you will be there twice as soon by going with me. Besides, if it comes to that, and you are so very anxious, I could set out to-day, about three o'clock. We shall get to Greta Bridge by ten, and then there will be the coach to-morrow, which will land you at Doncaster in the evening. If you were to set off on foot this minute, it would take you four days, or more, do what you would."

"Oh, the shortest—the shortest!" cried Jane. "But will they not let me be with him, mother? Did you say they will not let me be with him?"

"No, indeed, my dear child," replied her mother, "that will they not; but he shall soon be with you. Be comforted, Jane—be comforted."

The poor girl, however, could receive no comfort; and, to say the truth, she trusted not to her mother's promises, for she believed them to be solely intended to soothe and tranquillize her. Her whole thoughts, however, were bent upon setting off as soon as possible, and she wandered about without occupation, till at length, about half-past two, for the good old man was earlier than his hour, a boy ran up the little glen from the high road, to say that Mr. Gray was waiting, and to carry down anything that was to go.

Never did journey seem so long as the drive from Warmstone to Greta Bridge, to poor Jane; and to say sooth, the horse, though strong and well fitted for such a journey, was not the swiftest that was ever put in harness, nor was Mr. Gray the most dashing of charioteers. At length, however, they reached the borders of Yorkshire, and put up at the little inn at Greta, where Adam Gray's well-known face procured them instantly a warm reception from the shrewd Yorkshire landlord.

The good butler took care that the two women under his charge should be well treated in all respects; but Jane and her boy retired to rest almost immediately, leaving old Dame More once more alone with her ancient acquaintance. They remained together, in earnest conversation, for two or three hours, and Mr. Gray, in the course of the evening, called for pen, and ink, and paper, so that it was evident to the landlord some business of importance was being transacted between his two guests.

On the following morning the tax cart was sent back to Northumberland, and, proceeding in the coach, which at that day was not altogether so rapid a conveyance as at present, the whole party were, ere long, set down at Doncaster, where the old servant of Sir Morley Ernstein passed the night, for the kindly purpose of putting his two companions into what he called the way of doing for themselves at Doncaster. He was up early on the following morning, and was enjoying the sunshine for five minutes before breakfast at the door of the inn, when the landlord himself sauntered out, with a—"Good morning, Mr. Gray! So Sir Morley is gone to London, I hear; an odd time of the year to go to London, too!"

"He has some business there," replied Adam Gray, laconically. "Pray what is doing in Doncaster, Mr. Beilby?"

"Oh, nothing much to talk of," answered the landlord. "Yesterday there was a great piece of work, for they brought in the man who robbed Mr. Carr's house at Yelverly, not long ago. They have been looking after him for the last fortnight, or more, but he always managed to give them the slip till the other day, when they caught him in Northumberland, up somewhere in your parts, I believe; and a prodigious number of people there were to see him.—A fine-looking fellow he is, too, and set them all at defiance. He would not say a word before the magistrates; and, indeed, as Mr. Carr was too ill to attend, little Jeremy Sharpset, the lawyer, who appeared for the prisoner, insisted that they should discharge him, or, at the worst, remand him."

"And did they remand him?" exclaimed Adam Gray.

"Oh! not they," replied Mr. Beilby; "they would not hear any nonsense, but committed him to York Castle at once."

Adam Gray heard the tidings in silence, and turned into the inn to communicate the news he had obtained to those who were more interested in the matter than himself.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

MR. CARR STARTLED.

We must now endeavour to give the picture of a woman's mind under deep affliction, as a contrast to that which we have drawn of a man suffering from similar sorrow. Juliet Carr sat sad and lonely in her own room at Yelverly, meditating over lost happiness and bitter disappointment. Her father's health was better—that is to say, he was stronger, able to rise, and go about in the immediate neighbourhood, though the surgeon shook his head, warned him that no great exertions must be made, and gave Juliet herself to understand that Mr. Carr was still in a very precarious state. It was a great relief to her, however, to see his health even so far improved, for it removed the necessity of making that anxious struggle to do her duty towards him, by tending him in sickness, which she never failed in, notwithstanding his unwillingness to receive her attention, or be indebted to her care.

She sat, then, lonely in her chamber, thinking over her fate, and it must be acknowledged that sad indeed were all her feelings, and deep was the depression that rested on her mind. But very, very different was her endurance of the sorrow from that of Morley Ernstein. She was sensible that her happiness was gone for ever, her brightest hopes disappointed, the treasured affections of her heart, the first deep, earnest love of her young spirit cast away upon the ocean of Time—one of all the manifold things which in the course of the world are wrecked and perish in that engulfing sea. She felt her fate in all its bitterness, but she writhed not under the pang; she knew that it is woman's lot to endure, and she prepared her mind for a life of endurance. She wept often, it is true, but she prayed often, too. She prayed not only for herself, but for him whose peace was shipwrecked with her own—she prayed that God might give him happiness, consolation, relief—that the grief which had befallen him might not drive his impetuous nature to seek for amusement or occupation in paths of danger or of wrong—nay more, that he might find others to cheer and to support him—that his fate might be brighter than her own—that he might not remember, nor feel, nor love as long as she must do.

Morley had the world to go to for relief and for occupation. Juliet, in this respect, was far more unfortunate than he was, for she had nothing to take off the first edge of her sorrow; there was no variety in her existence, there was no one object to turn her thoughts from herself. Her father—though the sort of habitual respect with which he was accustomed to treat her, prevented him from breaking forth even into an angry word, nevertheless regarded her, when they met, with a stern and an inquiring eye; and the continual presence of the youth, William Barham, drove her often to seek the refuge of her own chamber, in order to avoid society which she did not like, and which every day was becoming more and more unpleasant to her.

From motives and with views which Juliet could in no degree divine, Mr. Carr used to indulge the weak, idle, selfish youth whom he had taken into the house, in every sort of whim and fancy. He, who was usually so parsimonious, refused the young man nothing that he desired, and an evident taste for drinking soon manifested itself in his unpromising protégé. Mr. Carr caused him to be supplied with wine, or spirits, or whatever he might think necessary, taking a note, indeed, of every farthing of expense, but still with a degree of liberality which astonished all who witnessed his proceedings. It may be easily supposed, that the sort of unlimited command which the youth had over everything in the house, was not only unpleasant to Juliet personally, but also was painful for her to witness, from the evil effects it was evidently producing upon the brother of Helen Barham.

In one of her letters to Helen, who still remained with Lady Malcolm, Juliet, after much hesitation, mentioned the facts and her apprehensions; and about four days afterwards, while her father and William Barham were both out, she suddenly heard the rolling of wheels, and the moment after her maid ran in to tell her that Miss Barham had just arrived from London.

Juliet went down in haste, and the meeting between Helen Barham and herself was like that of two sisters.

As Juliet held Helen in her arms for a moment, at their first meeting, she felt that she had hardly loved her half enough.

Luckily for themselves, they were suffered to be alone for several hours, for they had much to explain to each other which was difficult to tell—many subjects to speak upon, in regard to which even woman with woman hesitates. And Juliet had dreamt a dream, so mingled of sweet and noble purposes, of painful expectations, of devotion, of resignation, and of tenderness, that it was hard for her even to approach the subject—hard even to think of it, without the tears rising in her eyes, and her heart throbbing as if it would beat through her bosom. She gazed on Helen Barham, while they sat and talked together; she looked at her bright and sparkling beauty, almost as if she had been a lover; she read the deep, strong affections of those bright heart-full eyes, she fathomed in her own mind the well of intense feelings that existed in that soft bosom, and in her humility she asked herself—"What am I, that he should love me rather than her?"

Juliet went on with her inquiries, and demanded of herself, "Is it not possible—is it not even probable, that, knowing we can never be united, with his attachment to me broken by the cold hand of despair, his affections may turn to one who so well deserves them, and Helen Barham, happy in his love, may, in the end, make him happy likewise?" Not only was it likely, she thought, but scarcely to be doubted. It was impossible that he could see much of one so beautiful, so talented, so engaging, without learning to love her, if love for another could once be extinguished in his heart.

A pause had taken place while she thus thought, and Juliet saw her fair companion's eyes rest upon the green expanse before the house, while

an expression of deep melancholy stole over her countenance. Juliet read that look, and read it rightly; and though she felt somewhat timid, in regard to touching upon the subject at all, and sought not to raise any expectations, especially when she could not be sure that they might not be disappointed, yet she resolved, with the generous confidence of a pure and high mind, to let Helen know the exact position in which she herself stood towards Morley Ernstein. "I am sure," she said to herself, "that Helen will not rejoice in my disappointment. But, nevertheless, the knowledge that he whom she loves is not actually about to be united to another, may make a difference in her own fate and conduct."

Thus thinking, she fixed her eyes for a moment upon Helen Barham again, saying—"Dear Helen, you look somewhat pale and sad."

The blood rushed up into Helen Barham's cheek, from the well of consciousness in her heart. But Juliet went on, anxious to prevent her making any reply—"I am afraid, dear Helen," she continued, "that you are not very happy, though there never yet was one who more deserved happiness, I am sure. I can now sympathize with you, dear Helen, more deeply than I ever could do before, for I am not happy, either."

Helen started, and gazed eagerly in her face —"What is it you mean?" she cried. "You unhappy, Juliet!—you, whose day, I thought were to be all sunshine, blessed and blessing from the beginning of life to the close!—you, whose fate I believed was destined to show to man that it is possible to be happy, even on this earth!—you, who I fancied were to be for ever a being of brightness, and goodness, and joy!—you to be unhappy! Then, indeed, is this world a place of trial to every one!"

"Why should I be exempt, Helen?" replied Juliet. "I am not vain enough to think I deserved that which I believed was in store for me; and though deep and bitter has been the disappointment of all my hopes, yet I trust to be enabled, by God's mercy, to bear that disappointment calmly."

Helen Barham gazed earnestly and sadly in her face, making no reply, for some moments; but she then said—"Speak, Juliet, speak; tell me more, now you have told so much; but do not, do not say he was unworthy, for that I can never believe, even from your lips."

"Heaven forbid!" exclaimed Juliet, eagerly, with her whole soul coming into her beautiful eyes. "Unworthy! oh, no!—he is worthy of all the deepest, the tenderest, the most ardent, the most enduring love that even a woman's heart can bestow. But, alas, Helen, it is all in vain! He and I can never be united. Say not a word, dear Helen; for on this subject I must be very, very brief. I dare not speak—I cannot speak much, lest these tears should drown me. We can never be united, Helen; there is a barrier between us that cannot be removed; and my only hope, my only wish, is, to see him happy with some one who may deserve to share his fate."

Helen Barham cast her arms round Juliet's neck, and, for a moment or two, gave way to an overwhelming flood of tears. She made no comment, she asked no further question; and all she said, even in the end, was—"Oh, Juliet Carr—dear Juliet Carr!—would to God that I might spend my life with you! I know not, but I think that I might comfort you, as you have often comforted me; and that peace, Juliet—calm peace, which is all that either of us can hope for now, might sooner come to our dwelling if we were together. To be with you, even for a brief space, is a great happiness to me; and when your father sent for me—oh, how gladly did I come, although I had long tried to fancy that I was better away!"

There was a pause for several minutes, but at length Juliet asked—"Did my father, then, send for you, Helen?"

"Yes," replied Helen Barham. "Did you not know it, Juliet? He sent a messenger express to London for me, begging me to come down immediately, on business of importance."

"I never heard of it," said Juliet. "I thought you had come on your brother's account. But there are my father and Mr. Barham in the avenue. I will speak to you more about your brother, Helen, when I have an opportunity. There are many things of which I wish to warn you."

The traces of tears were then rapidly wiped off, the every-day look put on as a veil, and the very thoughts with which they had been so busy were chased away, lest they might still affect the countenance, as soon as Mr. Carr and William Barham approached the house.

The old lawyer himself had become extremely thin and haggard since Helen had seen him, and though he had recovered sufficient strength to drive to Doncaster on that very morning, he was evidently sadly broken and enfeebled. He met Miss Barham, however, with a good deal of that fawning courtesy which he always displayed towards those whom he sought to flatter and to win, and which was strangely, but not unnaturally, contrasted with the acerbity and sarcastic bitterness that he assumed towards those he disliked or despised.

The conduct of William Barham, on meeting with his sister, was such as the reader may very well conceive it would be. There was a shy coldness about it, a sort of schoolboy awkwardness, which was mixed with an affectation of ease; and, through all, an inquiring underlook of apprehension was apparent, as if he feared that Helen might have been betraying his secrets to Miss Carr. In short, every word and gesture rendered their meeting painful, even to Helen herself. Indeed, for many months, each conversation between the brother and sister had added but one source of grief or another to the number which the more amiable of the two had to bear; but now she remarked not alone the unpleasant and ungentlemanlike demeanour of her brother, but that in personal appearance a considerable and painful change had taken place. He looked thin and worn, and his face, which always bore a look of pale dissipation, was now marked by several purple blotches, in various places, and a bright red spot in the centre of each cheek. He had a peculiar cough, too, which Helen did not like; for she was old enough to

remember something very like it, before her mother's death; and the course which Juliet told her that her brother was pursuing was certainly not one to improve his health and restore his vigour. After Mr. Carr and the young man had been about ten minutes in the room, the former left it, with a chuckling laugh, saying to Helen, that he had a little note for her in his desk. He returned almost instantly, and put into her hand a long slip of writing, upon which she gazed with inquiring eyes, finding it very nearly, if not totally, unintelligible. "It is a sort of summons, my dear young lady," said the old man, "to appear and give evidence upon the trial of those villains who broke into the house. It is all in proper form."

Helen Barham turned very pale, saying—"I thought I should have been spared this;" and sitting down with the document in her hand, she continued gazing upon it in silence, with a thoughtful and anxious expression of countenance, as if placed in a situation of sudden and unexpected difficulty.

"Pray, Mr. Carr," she asked, at length, "was it on this account that you sent for me from town?"

Mr. Carr saw that he had pained her, and he was evidently not a little anxious to give her no offence.

"No, no," he replied, eagerly—"not entirely, my dear Miss Barham—not entirely; there are various other important things to be done. I must have your authority, as well as your brother's, to act upon. He is not quite of age yet, you know; and I have to consult with you upon a great many matters, though I have put your affairs into the hands of a gentleman, who agrees to take it upon the 'no cure, no pay' system. He sees his way as clearly as I do, and signs an agreement to stand all the expenses if he does not recover your property. Nevertheless, there is much to be talked about; and as to this affair," he continued, seeing that the first effect upon Helen's mind was wearing away—"you know, my dear Miss Barham, I acted for the best in giving you the subpœna here, where I was at your elbow to afford you advice and assistance. If I had not have done so, they would have sent it to you in London, and what would have come of it then? Nobody can escape such a thing, you know, my dear Miss Barham; it is one of the bounden duties of Englishmen to give evidence for the purpose of promoting the ends of justice."

Helen sat silent for a moment, and then asked—"What are the consequences, Mr. Carr, of a person refusing to give evidence?"

"Oh, very terrible, indeed!" exclaimed Mr. Carr; "I can scarcely tell you what might, or what might not be done; but, certainly, in the very first instance, anybody doing so would be committed for contempt of court, and then they might stay their whole life in prison."

Helen's cheek turned very pale, and Mr. Carr continued—"When anything happens to make witnesses wish not to answer, they generally contrive to evade the question, to say they are not sure of this thing or that—to equivocate a little, in short."

"But suppose they do not choose to equivocate?" said Helen.

"Then they tell the truth," said Mr. Carr, sharply.

Helen was silent and thoughtful, but there was a look of resolution in her face, which made Mr. Carr somewhat apprehensive that she would not act exactly in the way that he wished; and he was preparing all his eloquence to show her the dangers and inconveniences of the plan he suspected she was about to pursue, when one of the maids came into the room quickly, saying, with an impatient air—"There is an old woman, sir, at the door, wants to speak to you."

"I can't speak with her now, Sally," replied Mr. Carr; "she must come again."

"But she says she must speak with you directly, sir," rejoined the maid; "indeed, she is very saucy about it."

"Oh, I dare say it is that old woman Brown," said Mr. Carr, "who says always there was five shillings owing to her son who died. Tell her it is no such thing, and that she had better go away, or I will send for a constable."

"It isn't Goody Brown, at all," answered the woman, in a tone of very little reverence for her master—"she told me something about her name, but I forget what it was."

"Go, and ask it—go, and ask it, then!" said Mr. Carr; and he was about to recommence his argument with Helen during the girl's absence; but she was not away more than a minute, and returned with a vastly indignant air, saying—"The saucy old thing says she must and will see you directly—that her name is Jane More, widow of Sergeant More; and she will take no refusal."

Mr. Carr turned as pale as death, pressed his hand upon his heart, and sunk into a chair.

"You are not well," cried Juliet, starting up. "Let me go and speak to her, sir."

"No, no, no!" cried Mr. Carr, eagerly—"on no account. Take her into my little room, Sally. Some one give me a spoonful of brandy. Tell her I am not well, or I would have spoken to her at once, but I will come directly."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

A WARNING.

As soon as Mr. Carr had left the room, Helen Barham turned towards the place where her brother had been standing the moment before—not, indeed, to ask his advice as to her future proceedings, for, alas, she did not respect that brother sufficiently to trust in any of his counsels!—but with the sort of inquiring look which nature has taught us to direct towards any one nearly allied to us, in circumstances of difficulty or danger. To her surprise, however, William Barham was no longer there; and Juliet informed her that her brother had quitted the room as soon as Mr. Carr began to speak of the robbery. "Indeed," she added, with a smile, and little thinking her words would give pain, "I perceive that he always does so."

Helen Barham looked down, for the knowledge which she possessed of her brother's former course of life produced some apprehension lest William himself might be by some means implicated in the terrible transaction which was about to undergo the investigation of the law. When she recollected the conduct and the words of Harry Martin, too, the probability seemed so great, that she actually trembled at the thought of what might be the consequence; and the difficulties of her own situation became aggravated a thousandfold by fears for her brother.

Juliet remarked her agitation, perhaps with some surprise, but she made no observation, and Helen, as soon as she had recovered herself, left the room, saying, that she wished to speak with William for a few moments. She found him in the room to which she was directed by one of the servants of the house, busily engaged in packing up a portmanteau. He was looking extremely pale, and in answer to Helen's inquiries, said that he intended to go back to London the next day. He made some excuse for this sudden determination, which Helen did not clearly understand, alleging that it was necessary he should see "the lawyer;" but his sister could draw no farther information from him, and, indeed, he appeared anxious to free himself from her presence. She remained for some time, however, trying to soothe him, and endeavouring to call up some better feelings in his heart; but she found that her efforts were spent in vain, and with sorrow of various kinds in her bosom, she returned to the room where she had left Juliet.

As she laid her hand upon the lock of the drawing-room door, she heard her friend's voice calling loudly from a little room at the end of the corridor,—"Helen! Helen!" cried Juliet; "pray send some of the maids. Come to me, dear Helen—my father has fainted!"

Helen ran into the room in which Mr. Carr usually transacted his business, and found him seated in a chair, as pale as death, with his daughter supporting his head.

"Something has happened," said Juliet, in a low voice—"something has happened between him and that woman who was here just now; for the moment that she was gone, he called for me eagerly, but before I could reach him he was in the state that you see."

Measures were immediately taken for restoring Mr. Carr, and in about half-an-hour they proved successful. He opened his eyes faintly and looked around him, and then endeavoured to rise from his chair, but was unable to do so. He was very angry, however, when he found that a medical man had been sent for, vowed it was ruin and destruction, and reproached Juliet bitterly for bringing him, as he termed it, to poverty and disgrace.

Poor Juliet wept, not so much at the sting of her father's reproaches, as because she thought his senses were bewildered; for although Mr. Carr throughout life had displayed his avarice in acts, he had been very careful to avoid suffering the miser to appear in his words. He often, on the contrary, affected a tone of liberality; talked much about "petty savings," and people being "penny wise and pound foolish;" with all those old proverbs and saws of liberality, which are more frequently in the mouths of the greedy and the avaricious than of the really generous and open-handed.

Gradually, as he recovered himself, he became more guarded again, said that as the doctor had been sent for he could not help it, but at the same time put Juliet away from him with a cold air, and begged that she would not act in such a way another time without his authority. He asked, moreover, with a look of doubt and suspicion, if she had seen that old woman, and seemed relieved when he was informed that such had not been the case.

The surgeon, when he arrived, would fain have sent Mr. Carr to bed, declared that he was much more ill than he believed himself to be, and protested that he would not answer for the consequences if his directions were not obeyed. Mr. Carr resisted, however, saying, that there could be no use of his going to bed then, as he must set off for York at six o'clock on the following morning, to be present at the assizes.

It was in vain that Juliet remonstrated, and besought him to refrain from an act which the surgeon assured him might cost his life,—it was in vain that she represented how little it mattered whether the men who robbed his house were convicted or not, if his own death was to be the result. He grew angry with her arguments, telling her that she knew not what she was talking about, and could not enter into his views, or understand his motives; and so far, at least, he seemed to be in the right, that the very exertion appeared to do him good, for during the evening he went about making his preparations with much greater strength than either Juliet or Helen believed him to possess.

He was pale when he rose on the following morning, and his hand shook a good deal, as if he had had a slight stroke of the palsy; but his determination of proceeding to York was so evident, that Juliet dared offer no farther opposition, and only petitioned to be allowed to accompany him. He did not comply with her request, however, saying, somewhat impatiently, that there was no need of increasing the charges at an inn. His daughter judged, and judged rightly, that the apprehension of expense was not the sole cause of her father's unwillingness to take her with him, and she did not venture to propose that arrangement which had but too often taken place between him and herself—namely, that she should pay her share from her own private income.

As soon as the chaise appeared, Mr. Carr and Helen Barham got into it, and the door was already shut when William Barham, who had been wandering about the house during the whole morning, as if not knowing what to do with his vacant time, ran up to the side of the vehicle, and spoke a few words to Mr. Carr. The old man seemed surprised, but after a reply and a rejoinder, exclaimed—"Very well—very well, then—only make haste!"

The youth's portmanteau was immediately sent for, and strapped upon the carriage; he himself took his place inside, and the whole

party were borne away in a very few minutes. To Juliet, who watched them from the window, the words which William Barham had spoken were inaudible; and she was not a little surprised to see the young man depart, even for a short time, without the ordinary courtesy of bidding her adieu; for, to say the truth, there had been a growing familiarity in his manner, which, though difficult to check, had been not a little disagreeable to her. On the present occasion, she concluded that he was going to witness the trial at York, and was glad of the relief; but she would have been still more surprised at his conduct, though even better satisfied with the result, if she had known that he only proposed to accompany Mr. Carr as far as the high road, and there to get a place in the first coach for London.

While in the carriage with Mr. Carr and Helen, William Barham maintained that sort of dull reserve which his sister's presence seemed now to produce invariably, and only entered into conversation for the purpose of hinting to the old lawyer that he wanted a supply of money. With scarcely a moment's hesitation given to his habitual reluctance to part with money on any consideration, Mr. Carr produced his pocket-book, and handed over at once two ten-pound notes to his young companion, only stipulating that, when they arrived at the inn, he should give a note of hand for the sum which he had received.

"This man has been called a miser and a usurer," thought Helen, "and yet he deals thus liberally and kindly. So do people gain the reputation of vices that they do not possess."

But poor Helen Barham knew not, that for every shilling which Mr. Carr lent to William, he calculated that he would gain fifty, if not a hundred per cent. On their arrival at the inn, which occupied the angle where the by road from Yelverly joined the high road from York to London, Mr. Carr and William Barham got out of the carriage; and the old lawyer carefully took a memorandum from the young man of the sum which had been given him. William then took leave of his sister, merely shaking hands as if she had been some common acquaintance, and the chaise rolled on towards York, while Helen's brother remained waiting the arrival of the coach. When it came, he got into the inside, seeing that it was already tenanted by two well-dressed young women, and an elderly gentleman; and in a few minutes the youth was in full conversation, casting away entirely all that reserve which he had displayed in the presence of his sister, and giving himself all sorts of airs, as if he were the scion of some noble house, frequenting the first society in the land, and possessing wealth at will.

Fast drove the coach along the road, and faster went the young man's tongue, the innocent girls within the vehicle gave full credit to every word he said, though not particularly liking his manners and appearance, and their elder companion, with more experience and knowledge of the world, setting him down, not exactly for what he really was, but for some saucy shop-boy, suddenly possessed of a few pounds, and raised in his own impudent imagination to the highest pitch of fortune.

At the end of about two hours, the coach drove up to an inn to change horses, and at the same moment a dark-coloured, but highly-finished barouche, rolled rapidly past on the side next to William Barham. The old gentleman who occupied the other corner, could only perceive that the carriage contained a man of a distinguished aspect, with fine features and a very dark complexion; but William Barham recognized with terror the well-known countenance of Lieberg, and saw that the keen dark eye rested upon him while the finger was raised and the brow contracted. He turned deadly pale, and became as silent as the grave.

The old gentleman remarked all this, and whispered to one of his daughters, "I suppose this vulgar young coxcomb is some valet-de-chambre, and if so, depend upon it that was his master who passed just now."

William Barham's sharp ears caught the meaning of the whisper, and his heart burned within him, but he did not dare to reply. His only resource was to betake himself to the outside of the coach at the next stage, and to drown the mingled feelings of apprehension and rage in five or six glasses of strong brandy and water, taken wherever the vehicle stopped long enough to give time for such potations.

CHAPTER XL.

A STRONG TEMPTATION.

It was in the interior of the well-known prison of York, just after nightfall, that the prisoner Harry Martin sat by himself, having been permitted a long interview with his wife in the course of the day, and having apparently derived great comfort and consolation from her presence—much greater, indeed, than that which he had derived from a conversation with his lawyer, who had taken a view of his case not the most encouraging. During the first day or two of his imprisonment he had, to say the truth, felt a degree of despairing anxiety which he had never before known in life; not, indeed, that he had displayed any external sign of apprehension, unless it were a stern gravity of language rather different from his usual gay and reckless tone. But upon the whole he had been calm, talking with any one who saw him upon indifferent subjects, and seemingly not at all engrossed with his own situation, but only feeling the general impression of a serious charge. His demeanour altogether had much pleased not only the governor of the prison, but also the turnkeys; and the former declared that he had seen many a guilty man in his day, but he had never seen any who had less the manner of one than Mr. Martin, nor could he conceive that what all the London officers said of him was true; while the turnkeys, on their part, vowed that, whatever he had done, Mr. Martin was "quite a gentleman."

The discipline of a prison was a very different thing then from that which it is now, and it

rarely happened that a harsh magistrate interdicted a prisoner before trial from any reasonable communication with his friends and acquaintances. All that was required from the governor of a gaol was the secure custody of the prisoner's person, and if that was properly cared for, few questions of any kind were asked.

There were hours fixed, however, beyond which any visits to the prison were not usually permitted, and it was with some surprise, therefore, that Harry Martin saw the door of his cell open a few hours after the ordinary time of admission.

"A gentleman wants to speak with you, Mr. Martin," said one of the turnkeys, and the prisoner, raising his eyes, beheld a tall and powerful man, wrapped in a travelling cloak, enter the room while the gaoler held the door for him to pass in.

Harry Martin was not one to forget readily a face he had once seen, but it took the reflection of a moment or two to connect that of his visitor with the events of the past; and ere his recollection served him, the door was closed, and he stood face to face with the personage whom we have called Count Lieberg. The moment that he became aware of who it was, the brow of the prisoner contracted, and he demanded sternly—"What do you want with me?"

Lieberg's dark, keen eye rested upon him heavily, with that sort of oppressive light which seemed at once to see into and weigh down the heart of those he gazed at, and he remained for a moment or two without making any reply, as if to let the man before him feel the full force of the basilisk glance.

"When last we met," he said, at length, "you took away some papers——"

Harry Martin had by this time recollected himself, and he replied, with a loud laugh—"When last we met? Did we ever meet at all? That is the question, my fine fellow. You seem to me as impudent as a quack doctor, and I dare say are as great a liar as a horse-chanter."

"When last we met," repeated Lieberg, in an unaltered tone, "you took a pocket-book of mine, containing some papers of value to me and of no value to you. What has become of them?"

"What has become of them!" cried Harry Martin. "If I took any papers of yours, depend upon it that they are by this time what you and I soon will be."

"And what is that?" demanded Lieberg.

"Dust and ashes—dust and ashes!" replied Harry Martin.

"You make a mistake," said Lieberg, calmly, "I have no intention of being anything of the kind. But listen to me for a moment, my good friend, and I will give you sufficient motives for making you change your mind in this business. Those papers are of great consequence to me; if they can't be found, the proofs of the facts to which they referred are the next important things to obtain. If you can furnish me with either the one or the other, you will benefit me and yourself too. Hear me!—you will save your own neck from the gallows—You will save your own life, I say."

"I would not, to save fifty lives," answered Harry Martin. "Come, don't talk to me any more about it, for I don't want to hear such stuff. You have no power to give life or to take it. You, who, if laws were equal, and punishments proportioned to crime, would find a far higher gallows than any of us poor fellows—you, who are a robber of more than money—a murderer of more than life—who gave you power to offer me safety, or anything like it?"

"The chance that placed me in the house which you broke into," replied Lieberg, "and the wit that made me lie quiet when I found there was no use in resisting. Upon my words hangs your life, and I pledge my honour to save it, if you but restore me those papers."

"Your honour!" exclaimed Harry Martin. "What's your honour worth? I have heard some tricks of your honour, that make it of as little value, to those who know what is underneath the surface, as a coiner's shilling."

"You are in the wrong," said Lieberg, calmly, keeping still fixed upon him that peculiar look which Harry Martin could not prevent himself from feeling, notwithstanding all his daring hardihood—"you are quite in the wrong, my good friend, and are risking your neck, or rather, I should say, absolutely condemning yourself to death for the sake of a youth who has betrayed you, and who was the first to bring upon you the eye of the law."

"Has he betrayed me?" demanded Harry Martin, with his eye flashing. "Has he betrayed me? If I thought that——"

"I can prove it," replied Lieberg. "You have mistaken your friends for your enemies, my good man. Listen to me for a very brief space of time, and you shall soon see that you have not only done me injustice, but yourself too. All the information that you possess, with regard to me and to my proceedings, has been derived from a youth whom you yourself know to be one of the most egregious liars in Europe, who has misrepresented my conduct to every one, even while I was acting for his own good. I should have supposed that you were too wise to trust to one word that he says, even from what you knew of him before; but surely you will not be foolish enough to give the slightest credit to the falsehoods which he has spoken of me, when you find that he is rascal enough to betray you without the least hesitation. Of the latter fact you may be quite sure, although he may very likely have bargained not to be brought forward at your trial. Take any means that you like to satisfy yourself, and you will find that almost immediately after the robbery had been committed, he went to the house of Mr. Carr, and has remained there ever since. You will find, also, that his sister has been brought down to give evidence against you; and every inquiry that you make will prove to you, more and more strongly, that it was he who pointed you out to the police as the man, even when suspicion had very naturally fallen upon two other persons."

Harry Martin walked up and down the narrow space of the cell, in a state of terrible agitation. "So, so!" he said, "this is the game! He shall smart for it!—I wish I had my hand upon

his shoulder, that's all; but I will have my day, yet. Never mind—revenge will come, and it is sweet!"

"It is, indeed!" said Lieberg, with a tone of such earnestness, that no one could doubt he felt the burning passion, the hell-thirst of which he spoke, with strong intensity, notwithstanding the calm and indifferent demeanour which he so generally affected. "It is, indeed," he said, "and no man who knows how sweet it is, lets slip the opportunity when presented to him. The way before you, my good friend, is open, and easy; give me those papers, or, if you really have them not, furnish me with the proofs, which I know you possess, against the boy, William Barham, and you at once save your own life, and gain your revenge against him; for I tell you fairly, it is at him I strike."

"Pooh! nonsense!—don't talk to me," cried Harry Martin; "it's his sister you want. You care devilish little about him. Do you think to come humbugging me in that manner."

"You are mistaken," said Lieberg, sternly; "I may seek revenge upon them both, and so may you, too, for she is as much your enemy as he is, and has come down for the express purpose of giving evidence against you."

"Not she!" cried Harry Martin; "that's a lie—I'll never believe it!"

"I tell you, she arrived in York last night, with Mr. Carr," replied Lieberg; "and, as you know, the trial comes on the day after to-morrow."

"She'll give no evidence against me, I'm sure," said Harry Martin, gazing down upon the floor, but speaking in a less assured tone than he had used before. "I don't think she would, if her life were at stake."

"If you are quite sure of that," answered Lieberg, in a meaning tone—"if you are quite sure that the fear of being committed, and of suffering a tedious imprisonment, will not induce her to give some intimation of the facts, you can trust her, and make yourself easy upon her score. It were as well, however, to recollect all the arguments that may be used to induce a girl like that to speak what she knows, however strongly she may have promised you not to do so. In the first place, they will show her, that, both morally and religiously, promises extorted under threats and the fear of death are always held to be no promises at all, and quite in vain. They will get lawyers, and priests, and friends, to tell her all this; and then they will set before her eyes her duty to her country, and show that everybody is bound, by the strongest of moral obligations, to aid in bringing an offender to justice. All the arguments, in short, which a poor gentleman, whom you call the devil, has supplied to make people betray each other under the idea of being very virtuous, will be used towards her, and with effect; and then, to back all these persuasions, will be held out the terror of the law, which is armed with power to punish those who do not do their duty to society. Do you think any girl will hold out against all this—against the arguments of lawyers, and friends, and divines—and most likely, against her own convictions also; and will quietly walk into a prison for an uncertain space of time, solely to save a man from the gallows whom she never saw but once in her life! If you do, my good friend, trust her—trust her by all means; you are the best judge of the value of your own neck, though probably there are some other people besides yourself, who may grieve for you, and who may be left destitute if you are hanged."

Harry Martin seemed shaken. He sat down at the table, he leaned his head upon his hands, and the workings of his countenance told how strong was the emotion within him. Lieberg watched him, with eyes terribly skilled in reading the passions and weaknesses of the human heart; and after he had paused for a moment, to let what he had said have full effect, he went on—"So much for the girl!—and you must recollect, that if she refuses to swear that you are the man, and assigns for the reason that her life had been spared, even that will tell against you, in some degree. Then comes her brother, and says all that he knows of you; then come I myself, and swear to you positively. Now, if you do what I want, you sweep away the whole of this mass of evidence at once, and, in fact, may be said to set yourself free."

"Why, how so?" cried Harry Martin. "How would that prevent her giving her evidence?"

"Do you think she would give her evidence against you, if by so doing she condemned her own brother to death?" demanded Lieberg, in a low, but emphatic tone; "and I promise you, she shall have that before her eyes, at all events."

Harry Martin gazed at him from under his bent brows, and for a moment or two a variety of different expressions passed over the prisoner's countenance, from which the dark, keen eye of Lieberg could extract no information in regard to what was passing in his bosom. All that his tempter could divine was, that he was shaken, that his resolution wavered, though there was a certain look of scorn mingled with all the shades that flitted across Martin's face, which was not very pleasant to his proud companion. He failed not, however, to ply him with every argument, to tempt him by every inducement, and Martin sat and listened, sometimes gazing full upon Lieberg sometimes bending his eyes down upon the table, sometimes frowning heavily, and sometimes indulging in a flickering smile, which crossed his countenance like the lights that we occasionally see carried across the open windows of a house, the tenant of which we know not, as we travel past it in a dark night.

"Well now, sir," he said, at length, looking up with a softened look in Lieberg's face—"Well now, sir, suppose I were to do as you wish, what surety should I have that you will stand by me, in the time of need?"

Lieberg bent down his head, speaking across the table, and replied, "I will acknowledge this night in presence of the turnkey, that in seeing you, and hearing your voice, I have become convinced you are not one of the men who broke into Mr. Carr's house, at Yelverly."

"That might do," said Harry Martin, in a thoughtful tone—"that would go a great way; but don't you think it would be a lie?"

"A lie!" exclaimed Lieberg, with his lip curling—"Are you fool enough to suppose, that a man of the world cares two straws about the mere empty shade of truth, when a great and important object is to be obtained? Where is the minister, the statesman, the patriot, who ever dreams of the abstract truth or falsehood of a particular proposition? The greatest reformer that ever lived, who harangues multitudes upon corruption, and all the evils that afflict a state or a religion, will no more scruple to falsify the truth in regard to an opponent, or to tell a bare falsehood to gain an end, than a schoolboy will to rob an orchard. Take them all, from Luther down to the lowest of your puritymongers in this happy island, and you will find that there is not one of them who considers truth and falsehood, except in reference to the end they have in view. Away with such nonsense between us—it is only fit for a schoolmistress's homily to girls of twelve years old. I will do what I say, and that is sufficient; and ere your trial comes on, I will so contrive to tutor Helen Barham that she shall work your acquittal, without committing herself."

"That will do—that will do!" said Harry Martin, meditating. "But then, sir, I thought you intended to have your revenge upon this young woman. I should not be sorry to have mine upon that scoundrel, her brother. Now let me see; though we jump together in that, I should not like the poor girl ill-treated at all—I don't suppose you would ever go to strike a woman, or to punish her in that sort of way, at all?"

Lieberg smiled contemptuously, and replied—"You cannot understand, my good friend, the nature of the revenge I seek; but be satisfied! It is nothing of the kind you imagine."

"But I should like to know what it is, sir," said Harry Martin—"I should much like to know what it is before I consent.—Anything in reason, but no violence!"

His tone was very much altered, and Lieberg marked with no light satisfaction that everything promised well for his purposes.

"Well," he said, at length, "my revenge should be this: to force her to be mine, to bind her to myself by ties she loathes and abhors—to bow her pride to the dust, by none of the ill-treatment that you dream of, but by caresses that she hates—ay, and daily to know that her situation, as my paramour, is a pang and an anguish to her, while she has no means of freeing herself from the bond!"

"Well," cried Harry Martin, starting up, with such fury that he overset the table, "you are a d——der scoundrel than I thought man could be! Get out, or I will dash you to atoms!" And at the same moment he seized Lieberg by the shoulder, as if to cast him headlong forth from the door.

To his surprise, however, he found that, notwithstanding all his own great strength, he could not move him in the least, and that the dark man before him stood rooted like a rock to the floor.

"Beware!" said Lieberg, lifting up his finger with a scornful smile, as the prisoner drew back in some astonishment—"beware!" and at the same moment one of the turnkeys opened the door to inquire what was the matter.

Lieberg went out without making any reply, and the prisoner was once more left alone.

"Ay," said Martin when he was by himself; "now if they have a cell in the place fit to receive a man that has murdered his own father, they should put that fellow into it. How the scoundrel was taken in, to tell all his rascality!—I don't believe a word of it—she'll never 'peach. I know a little bit about women, too, and I'll bet my life she doesn't say a word—only those rascally fellows may get it out of her; those lawyers. I have seen them puzzle a cleverer head than hers with their questions. However, we will see: a man can but die once, and I'd rather do that while I'm about it, than give the poor girl up into the hands of such an infernal villain as that, even if I had the papers to give him, which, thank God, I have not!—for no man can tell what he will do when he is tempted.—I suppose it will go hard with me after all!" and with this not very pleasant reflection, Martin cast himself into a chair, and appeared to give himself up to calculate the chances for and against himself, with a heavy brow and a sad and anxious eye.

CHAPTER XLI.

HELEN'S PROMISE.

MAN, in his collective quality, is undoubtedly a gin-drinker, a lover of ardent spirits, a seeker of all that stimulates the palate, both mental and corporeal. The wholesome food of every-day life we soon learn to loathe, and even the excitement of the imagination by the mimic scene or tale of fictitious distress is willingly cast away for the more potent taste of real sorrow and actual crime. How we flock to see the trial of any notorious criminal!—how eagerly we watch the workings of apprehension and anguish on his countenance!—how critically we examine the gradations of emotion, and fear, and awe, and despair, as they move the stubborn features, or make the strong frame writhe! How we gloat upon the deadly anguish of a fellow-human heart through all the terrible scenes in the administration of justice, from the first examination of the captured criminal, to the last dread moment upon the fatal drop!

The criminal court at York was filled to the doors. The reporters for the London newspapers were all present, come down to the mart of excitement for the purpose of hawking it in retail over the whole country. Manifold were the lawyers present to hear what they justly expected would prove a curious case, and the rest of the place was occupied by a various multitude, not only from the city itself and the neighbouring county, but from various parts of England, and even from the capital. There was expectation in every countenance, and each little movement that took place in the court created not only a slight rustling murmur, and a motion of every head forward to see what was taking place, but also produced the palpitation

of many a heart from mere eagerness and anxiety for the result. A great part of the crowd consisted, as is usually the case, of women, and a more than ordinary interest had been excited amongst the fairer and tenderer portion of the community, by the rumours which had been circulated regarding the prisoner Martin. He had become, as it were, the hero of the day; and his long evasion of the officers' pursuit, his sojourn on the moors, and his capture in attempting to escape from a distant cottage, had all been magnified, and made the theme of wonder and comment, so that more than one penny pamphlet, containing an account of "the adventures of Harry Martin," had been produced from the brains of several marvelmongers in York. Then, again, there was the tale of his beautiful young wife and her mother having followed him to the place of his confinement; and a report was current that the old woman had been heard to say, on several occasions, that Harry was not guilty, and that it would prove so; which created a very general belief in his innocence amongst the many whose ignorance of all the mass of crime that exists in this world renders them ever ready to believe that those who boldly assume virtue, are virtuous.

At length, the expected moment came for the trial of Martin and his companions, and the prisoners were brought in and placed at the bar. All eyes were upon them, and certainly an awful moment must it be, when a man enters a crowded and expecting court, loaded with the charge of a heavy crime, waiting for the ordeal of a public trial, knowing that his fate for life or death is there to be sealed in a few short hours, and sees fixed upon him the thousand eyes of a multitude who have come there to pry into and enjoy all his emotions, to witness the terrible struggle, and mark how he bears his destiny. It must be a strong heart, or a hard one, that can endure that first look with calmness.

Very different from each other, in aspect and demeanour, were the four men who now advanced into the dock. Two of them hung their heads and looked down upon the ground; one of them gazed around with a faint and affected smile, nodding to some one that he saw in the crowd, and labouring painfully to appear at ease. Martin, on the contrary, came forward, looking straight before him, with his head erect, his broad chest expanded, and his step slow, but firm. His brow was somewhat knit and thoughtful, but his air was frank as usual, and after having gazed towards the bench and the barristers' table, he turned his eyes slowly to the right and left, scanning the eager faces of the crowd with an unquailing eye and an unchanging countenance. The clerk of the arraigns then read the indictment, charging the four prisoners with breaking into the house of Mr. Carr, at Yelverly, and stealing thence various sums of money, and articles of gold and silver, and he then asked the prisoners severally for their plea.

Contrary to the expectation of all present, while the three men who had seemed most cowed by the aspect of the court, pleaded "Not guilty," in a firm and distinct tone, and gave an immediate answer, Martin paused for a moment, ere he replied, as if he had some hesitation, and then answered likewise, but in a low voice, "Not guilty."

It may seem strange, it may be called unnatural, but I believe that, at that moment, there was in the heart of the bold and criminal man, of whom I speak, a repugnance to tell a public falsehood, and to put in a plea that was not true. He would have given a great deal, as he stood there, to have been permitted to claim the old battle ordeal—ay, if there had been twenty champions against him; but with all his faults and crimes, he liked not to say he was not guilty, when he knew himself to be so.

The jury was then called over and sworn, no challenges being made, and after the usual formalities, the counsel for the Crown addressed the court, with a due sense of the responsibility that rests upon him who undertakes the part of public accuser. Not one word did he say to display his own skill or eloquence, to excite the passions of his auditory, or to prejudice the cause that was about to be tried. He mentioned the facts of the robbery as they had taken place, the evidence by which he intended to prove those facts, the circumstances which he thought might justly fix the crime upon the prisoners at the bar, and then left it to the jury to decide whether they were guilty or not, according to the impression produced by the testimony about to be given before them.

After the conclusion of the counsel's speech, a momentary interruption of the proceedings took place, and a report ran round the court, that one of the principal witnesses had been taken suddenly ill. The judge and the counsel for the Crown held some conversation together, the principal part of which was only heard by those near them; but at length the former said distinctly—"I think that such is the best course to pursue. It does not much matter to you in what order the evidence is taken, and, probably, before we have proceeded far, the witness may be able to appear."

The counsel acquiesced in the judge's view, much to the relief of the spectators, who had become apprehensive that they might lose their amusement for the morning.

The two witnesses first called were the female servants of Mr. Carr, who, together with the labourers who had come to the rescue of the inhabitants of Yelverly, proved the facts of the robbery, but could say nothing to fix the guilt upon either of the prisoners in the dock. The housemaid, indeed, dealt a little in the marvellous, and though her fellow-servant had declared that she was asleep the whole time, vowed that she had seen one of the robbers, and that he was at least six inches taller than any of the prisoners; which called from the prisoner's counsel the significant remark, that the maid's testimony would go far to fix the burglary upon the Irish Giant. He declined to cross-examine her, however, saying, with a nod and a shrewed look to the jury, that her evidence was very well as it was, and would be received for as much as it was worth—but no more. Some of the prisoners smiled, but Harry Martin still remained grave and thoughtful. His brow, indeed, gathered into a stern frown when the name of the next witness was

pronounced, and Frederick, Count Lieberg, was called into court.

The foreign appellation, and the rank of the witness, caused a movement of curiosity amongst the spectators, and a slight murmur, in the midst of which, Lieberg advanced, and took his place in the witness-box, with that sort of calm and impressive demeanour, which bespeaks both attention and belief—very often, alas! where neither is due.

Lieberg's handsome face, too, and fine person, the accurate taste of his dress, and his military carriage, all struck the spectators and the court, and prepared them to give full credit to every word that he uttered. The judge alone, long accustomed to remark the slightest changes of the human countenance—whose memory was, in short, a dictionary of looks—remarked a something when the eye of the witness lighted on the prisoner Martin, which made him say to himself —"There is a hatred there." It was no permanent expression, but one that passed like a gleam of lightning over his face, and was gone—a flash of the eye, a sudden convulsive curl of the lip, a momentary contraction of the brow, and then all was calm again.

After stating who and what he was, and that he had visited the house of Mr. Carr for the purpose of hiring some shooting in the neighbourhood, Lieberg went on to give, in a clear and perspicuous manner, and, as usual, without the slightest foreign accent in the world, his account of all that occurred on the night of the robbery. Nor was that account far different from the truth, for Lieberg well knew that truth is always more convincing than falsehood, and, consequently, he contented himself with as little of the latter ingredient in his story as was possible, consistent with his purposes. The only part, then, of his statement which was calculated to deceive, was that he had been roused out of his sleep by a scream, and was issuing forth from his room to see what it was, when he received a blow on the head, which stunned him for a few minutes. He next proceeded to say, that on recovering his senses, he found himself bound, and, looking through his half-closed eyes, saw two men in his chamber, rifling his trunks and dressing-case. They remained there, he continued, for some time, talking aloud, and then went away, leaving him still tied.

"Have you seen either of those men since?" demanded the examining counsel.

"I have," replied Lieberg, firmly. "I see one of them now,"—and he fixed his eyes upon Harry Martin, with a stern look.

The judge smiled, as he saw the direction of his glance; but the counsel bade the witness point out the man, if he still saw him in court. Lieberg immediately held out his hand towards Martin, saying—"Of the four prisoners in the dock, the one upon the extreme right, I can swear to, as one of those whom I saw in my room that night."

As he spoke, he bent his eyes full upon Martin's face, and the prisoner returned his stare, with a look as proud and powerful as his own; and again a murmur ran through the court, as the spectators remarked the glances which those two men interchanged.

"Do you see in the court the second man who was in your room?" demanded the counsel.

"I think that the other prisoner, at the further end of the dock, is he," said Lieberg; "but I cannot swear to him."

After a few more questions, the examination in chief was ended, and Count Lieberg was turned over to the hands of the prisoners' counsel, who proceeded to cross-examine him at length.

It is a terrible engine, a cross-examination, in the hands of one who knows how to wield it properly. It is a sort of mental torture, for the purpose of making a witness confess the truth, but which, like the rack and the thumb-screw, has as often brought forth falsehood, as that which is sought to be elicited; and yet it is impossible, perhaps, to do without it. The proud spirit of Lieberg writhed within him at all that he was obliged to endure during his cross-examination, but with the wonderful command which he possessed over himself, he covered, for a long time, all his feelings with an exterior of cold composure; revenging himself, from time to time, upon the counsel, by a bitter sneer, which made the court smile, though his own lip remained unmoved and stern.

He was made to go over and over again the exact position in which he stood, when he received the blow that stunned him; and a number of questions were asked which seemed directed to puzzle the witness, more than to accomplish any other object; and then the counsel demanded, suddenly, whether he were not actually up, and at the door of his room, when he heard the scream he had mentioned?

"I have already said," replied Lieberg, "that it woke me from my sleep; and I must appeal to the court, whether this course of examination is to be persisted in?"

The judge, however, did not see that the question was at all objectionable, and the counsel had the pleasure of finding that he had irritated the witness. He then went on to ask him, by what signs and external marks it was that he recognized the prisoner; and he made him acknowledge that the faces of the men he had seen were covered with a black crape, and their figures enveloped in smock frocks.

"How was it, then," the counsel asked, "that the Count recognized one of them so rapidly?—was it by his feet, which might have appeared from under the smock frock—or was it by his hands?"

Lieberg replied that it was by his general appearance; and, knowing that his visit to the prisoner's cell might, sooner or later, be made a subject of discussion, he determined, with his usual decision of character, to touch upon it at once himself.

"I remember him," he said, "by his general appearance, and also by another indication. I have told the court that I heard him speak for some time——"

"But," exclaimed the counsel, interrupting him, and evidently prepared for what was to follow, by some intimation from Martin himself —"but you have not heard him speak in this

court; and I will now ask you, Count Lieberg, upon your oath—remember, you are upon your oath, sir—whether you did not visit this prisoner in York Castle, for the purpose of entering into a compromise with him, which would have nullified your evidence here this day?"

The counsel for the Crown here interfered, and the court declared that the question could not be so put in such a shape, though the counsel for the prisoner asserted that it was necessary for his defence. The very discussion, however, produced what the keen lawyer desired—namely, a doubt in the minds of the jury; and Lieberg's eye gathered, in a moment, from the countenances around him, that an advantage had been gained by his adversary. He decided at once upon his line of conduct, and, bowing to the court, said, with a degree of rapidity which rendered it difficult to stop him—"The question has been asked, and I am not only willing, but desirous, of answering it at once. It is very easy for a hireling advocate, by base insinuations, to affect the character of a witness, but the stain must not rest upon my honour. I did visit the prisoner the night before last; but it was, as I explained to those who gave me admission, for the purpose of hearing him speak in common conversation, with a view to make myself quite sure of his identity. He threatened me, it is true, if I gave evidence against him, and——"

But the court again interfered, in a peremptory tone, signifying distinctly, that neither the counsel nor the witness could be allowed to go on in the course which they were following, and Lieberg's cross-examination was soon after terminated, the barrister who conducted it being satisfied with the impression which he had produced, and which remained unfavourable to Count Lieberg; for suspicion is one of those evil weeds which, when once planted, can by no possibility be eradicated from the soil in which they have taken root.

Lieberg left the witness-box with a frowning brow, but took a place in the court to see the rest of the proceedings. At the next name that was called, there were two hearts that beat in the court—that of the prisoner, and that of Count Lieberg; but it was the heart of the latter which throbbed most violently when the crier pronounced the words—"Helen Barham!" He looked round the people, and thought it strange to see the indifference upon the faces of all; for so intense were his own sensations, that he forgot the crowd were not aware who Helen Barham was, and that the name, for aught they knew, might appertain to some inferior person in the household of Mr. Carr. When she appeared, however, and lifted her veil, her extraordinary loveliness produced at first a dead silence, and then a low murmur of admiration. Helen's cheek, which was unusually pale when she entered, grew crimson as she saw the multitude of eyes upon her, and read in every look the effect of her beauty upon the crowd. To one feeling as she did, that admiration was a very painful part of a situation already too terrible. She turned pale again—she turned red—she felt as if she should faint; and, while in this state, an old mumbling officer of the court put a book into her hand, ran over indistinctly some words she did not hear, and then added, in a louder tone—"Kiss the book!" Helen obeyed mechanically; and, after a short pause, to allow her to recover herself, her examination began. The counsel for the Crown addressed her in a softened voice; and while she spoke in answer to his questions, and detailed all that had occurred on the night of the robbery, the prisoner, Martin, never took his eyes from her face. At the same time, the dark light of Lieberg's—if I may use a term which seems a contradiction—poured upon her countenance unceasingly. It seemed as if he were trying to intimidate her by that stern fixed gaze; but Helen had now regained her composure, and proceeded unwavering, with her soft musical voice, in a tone low indeed, but so clear, that each word was heard by every ear. There was no backwardness—no hesitation; and there was not a heart in that hall which did not feel she was uttering the simple, undisguised truth. She told how she had been awakened; how she had seen the face of one of the robbers; how she had uttered an involuntary cry; how he had rushed towards her, with the intention of burying her testimony against him in the silence of the grave, and how he had spared her.

She paused for a moment, while a tear or two ran over her cheek, and hers were not the only eyes in the court that shed bright drops.

She then went on to tell all that had occurred afterwards, till the period when she was left alone in Sheffield; and then the counsel took a grave and somewhat sterner tone with her, saying—"Miss Barham, I feel deeply for your situation, after the promise that you have made, for the purpose of saving your life; but before I propose to you the question which I am about to ask, I beg to remind you, first, that no promise exacted under fear of death can be held binding for one moment; secondly, that you have a duty to your God and to your country to perform—to the laws, and to society in general, which duty must be accomplished unflinchingly; and I now ask you, by that duty, however much pain it may give you—Do you, or do you not, see in this court the man whose face you beheld on the night in question?"

Helen paused, and there was a dead silence through the whole hall.

"I will not prevaricate in the least," she replied, in a voice still firm, though her face was very pale, "and I know fully what I expose myself to; but I will not answer, in any way, a question which endangers the life of a man who spared mine when my death would have ensured his safety. I will not say, whether I do see him or do not see him, and I will bear no testimony against him whatsoever."

Again there was a profound silence in the court; and then the counsel expostulated, and the judge, in a mild but serious manner, brought forward every argument which could be adduced, to persuade Helen Barham to answer the question asked her; but nothing moved her, and when he added a threat of using the authority

with which he was invested for punishing contempt of the court, she replied in a mild and humble, but still a firm tone—"I came hither, my lord, with a full knowledge of what you might be obliged to do; and I have only to beseech you, in consideration of the circumstances in which I am placed, to deal with me as leniently as possible, believing that it is a firm belief I should be committing a great crime, were I to act otherwise, that makes me maintain a silence which, whatever it may be called, does not border in the slightest degree upon contempt."

The good judge looked down, evidently distressed and puzzled how to act. But the counsel for the Crown—resolved at all events to gain some admission which might prove the fact he wanted to establish—demanded, somewhat suddenly—"Is it your final determination, Miss Barham, not to point out in this court the man whose face you saw on the night in question?"

"I did not say he was in the court," replied Helen, who had studiously kept her eyes turned from the dock ever since she entered—"I know not whether he is in the court or not. I merely said that I would not answer any question on the subject. If it were to affect my life itself I would make the same reply, for that life which he spared he has every right to require again, if by the sacrifice of it his own can be shielded."

"I fear," said the judge, "that the dignity of the court must be vindicated. Miss Barham, I warn you, that if you still refuse to give evidence, I must commit you for contempt, as the most lenient method of dealing with you."

Helen bowed her beautiful head, replying, in a low tone—"I know it, my lord."

"Let the warrant be made out," said the judge; "and let the witness be removed in custody."

As he saw Helen quitting the witness-box in charge of the officers of the court, Harry Martin took a quick step forward to the front of the dock, as if about to speak, but at that moment a warning voice was heard amongst the crowd, exclaiming—"Harry!"

His eyes ran rapidly round to that side of the court, and he saw his wife with her two hands clasped, gazing with a look of agony in his face. He instantly cast down his eyes again, and drew slightly back, while one of his companions in captivity whispered—"Well, that girl is a diamond!"

In the mean while, a pause had taken place in the court; and the judge anxious to get rid of the impression which Helen's conduct had produced upon himself as well as others, directed the next witness to be called. The name of Mr. Carr was accordingly pronounced, the counsel at the same time asking some one who stood near if that gentleman were well enough to appear. Ere an answer could be given, however, Mr. Carr himself was supported into the witness-box, and was accommodated with a seat. He was deadly pale, and shook very much, as if affected by cold or fear; and he gave his evidence in so low a tone, that the examining barrister was more than once obliged to bid him raise his voice. He, as the rest of the witnesses had done, detailed all that he knew of the robbery, but as his room was the one which had been the most completely rifled, he appeared to have seen more of the actual robbers than any one else. There were four of them, he said, and he had had a good opportunity of marking them well while they tied him to the bed-posts, and stripped his chamber of all that was valuable in it. He had not seen their faces, it is true, but nevertheless, from their general appearance, he could swear to them anywhere.

Towards this part of Mr. Carr's evidence, he seemed to become heated by the thought of the property he had lost, and he spoke much louder and quicker than before, but just then there was a little bustle and confusion on the opposite side of the court, and Mr. Carr raised his eyes. What he saw there no one knew, but his voice fell and his countenance changed; and when the counsel told him to point out the persons who had robbed him, if he saw them in the court, Mr. Carr gazed into the dock with a vacant look, and shook his head, saying—"I do not think any of those are the men. The three on this side, indeed, might be amongst them, but that man beyond"—and he pointed to the prisoner Martin—"was certainly not one."

A murmur of surprise, and it must be said of indignation, took place at the counsel's table, for lawyers are not easily deceived in such matters, and there was not one man there who was not perfectly convinced that the prisoners at the bar were the persons who had committed the robbery, and, moreover, that Mr. Carr knew it to be so. The examining counsel made one more effort, by asking Mr. Carr how he happened to be so sure in the case of Martin.

"Because," replied Mr. Carr, "none of the housebreakers were so tall and powerful."

"And yet," said the barrister, turning round to his brethren, "two of the other prisoners are taller than he is. My lord, I think it is inexpedient, after what we have heard, to call any further witnesses."

"I think so too," said the judge; "but I shall let the case go to the jury."

The prisoners declined making any defence, and the judge remarked it was scarcely necessary for him to sum up the evidence, adding—"A more disgraceful case I have never had the misfortune to see tried." The jury, without quitting the box, returned a verdict of "Not Guilty."

The judge then addressed the prisoners, saying—"A jury of your country has acquitted you of a great crime, and I will not take upon myself to make any observation tending to impugn the only verdict it could return under the circumstances; but, at the same time, you will feel that there are facts connected with this trial which give it a peculiar character, and that the same are never likely to occur again. If, then, either or any of you have hitherto led a vicious or criminal life, let the danger you have now run be a warning to you.—I do not think, sir," he continued, addressing the leading counsel for the crown, "that after what has taken place, we can deal very severely with Miss Barham. Let it be notified to her, that upon due petition the court will order her discharge;" and he turned to his paper to see what was the next case set down for trial.

CHAPTER XLII.

ABROAD.

"THE climate, not the heart, he changes who flies across the wave." So said the old Roman, some thousand years ago, and doubtless what he said was true, both in his own day, when men cultivated a firm, fixed spirit within them, and also in the present, in the case of some individuals, to whom has descended the gem-like hardness of the antique mind, on which lines, once engraved, are never to be effaced. Nevertheless, in the rapid change of scene, in the running from land to land, in new sights and new excitements, in the companionship of fresh acquaintances, and even in the every-hour collision with our fellow-creatures which takes place only in travelling, one wears away the sharpness of some sorrows, as the gem which has rolled for ages in the waters of the Tiber, or which is cast up by the waves of the Ægean Sea, though it retains the figures which were cut into it ages ago, loses the sharp outline that it received from the graver's tool.

Morley Ernstein had executed his purpose; he had quitted England to search—not for happiness, but for forgetfulness—not forgetfulness of her he loved, but forgetfulness of himself and of his situation.

A fit of illness which overtook him at Calais, of no very serious character or long duration, only served to increase his irritation and impatience. He had been angry before with the weakness of his mind, as he called it; he now felt a degree of scorn at himself and at human nature, for that weakness of body which yields to any of the trifling accidents of air and climate; and the very irritation which he felt, increased and prolonged the sickness under which he laboured.

At length, however, he was convalescent, and being permitted to go out for an hour or two, walked forth into the town, thinking that in its streets he might find something to call his mind away from himself. But little indeed can the good town, whose name was written upon Mary's heart, display, even to the eyes of an Englishman, to occupy or interest him for a moment. It is a sad, dull place, but in those days the communication between France and England having been interrupted for many years, and only opened for a few, there was a kind of local colouring about Calais which supplied the want of other attractions. Nothing, however, presented itself, in the aspect of the place, or in anything on which his eye rested, that could carry the mind of Morley Ernstein away to other days, till he paused for a moment, after a ramble round the market-place, before a bronze bust, which is not easily to be passed unnoticed.

Of all the heads in modern times, perhaps that of the Cardinal de Richelieu was the one which afforded the finest subject for the sculptor. All the paintings of him are weak when compared to his character; it is in bronze that his image ought to go down to posterity.

The moment Morley's eyes fixed upon his bust, the lightning of the mind flashed back into the chasm of past years—the scenes of other days, the block, the axe, the chamber of the torture, and all the dark implements with which that terrible man built up the fabric of his greatness, came before his eyes in a moment, and, for the first time since the cloud of sorrow had fallen upon him, his spirit found a momentary sunshine in the memories of ancient lore.

While Morley continued to gaze at the bust of Richelieu—shut up, in short, like the lady of the Arabian giant, in a glass-case of his own sensations and thoughts, through which he could be seen, but could not be approached—he was suddenly roused by hearing his name pronounced, and, turning round, saw a countenance not less striking than that of Richelieu himself, nor, upon the whole, very different in character.

The first impression was not pleasant, for the loneliness of heart that he felt upon him, made him repugnant to all companionship. Neither was the man he saw one in whom he was inclined to trust, or to confide—one whose sympathies were with him, or upon whose counsel he could rely; but yet, to say the truth, when he remembered the charm of his conversation, the power that he seemed to possess of leading the mind of others with whom he held any communication, away from all that was unpleasant or painful, to brighter objects and to calmer thoughts, the first shrinking feeling of unwillingness passed away, and he stretched out his hand frankly, exclaiming—"Lieberg! I little dreamed of meeting you here."

"I as little thought to see you in Calais," said Lieberg, in reply; "but I did trust to overtake you in Paris; for on my return to town, I heard that you had suddenly quitted England, that something had gone wrong with you, and that you were about to make an autumnal wandering in other lands."

Lieberg paused, seeing that the allusion which he had made to the cause of his companion's quitting England made Morley's brow knit heavily, and his eyes seek the ground. "To say the truth," continued Lieberg, "I am not in the best spirits myself, and I am somewhat aweary of this working-day world. I tried all the various resources of Great Britain for shaking off the dulness of this season of the year—fired a gun or two upon the moors, spent a day at a fashionable watering-place, and finding that everything was vanity and vexation of spirit, set off, post haste, to overtake you in Paris, and see if you would take a grumbling tour with me through foreign lands."

The picture which he gave of his state of mind was adapted with infinite art to the mood which his keen and penetrating eyes saw at once was dominant with his companion. A faint, and, as it were, unwilling smile, was Morley's only reply; but he passed his arm through that of Lieberg, and as they turned back towards the inn, the latter proceeded—"We can go, you know, across from Paris to Cologne, then ramble along the banks of the Rhine, make our way through the Tyrol into Italy, spend the cold season at Rome or Naples, and then, if you like it, '*mitescente hyeme*,' return to England. Or," he continued, "if that suits you not, we can ramble still farther,

plunge into Calabria, visit the blue shores of Greece, see the fairy-tale wonders of Constantinople, range through the scenes of the crusades in Syria and Palestine, and scour on fleet horses the sandy deserts of Egypt. Where need we stop, Morley? I have no tie to one quarter of the globe—you have none either, that I know of; the world is all before us, and the wonders, not only of a hundred countries, but a hundred ages. Where shall we not find some astounding records of the mighty past? Some of those marbles, which, in their slowly perishing grandeur, teach us the littleness of all things present, and, amongst the rest, of the cares and sorrows that we may both be suffering. Of those cares and sorrows we will speak no more; I ask you not what are yours—you question me not regarding mine. But let us onward, onward together, through all the varied scenes of earth, pausing no longer anywhere than while enjoyment is in its freshness, taking the grape while the bloom is upon it, and the flower before a leaf is shed. Once more, what say you?—shall it be so?"

There was something in the tone in which he spoke, in the picture that he presented, in the very rapid succession of objects which he proposed, that seemed addressed with careful calculation to the weaker part of Morley's character—to the rash, the impetuous, the excitement-loving spirit, which had long been kept down by the influence of the better soul within him. There was nothing in the scheme against which that better soul could raise the warning voice; there was no one thing suggested which could be branded with the name of evil. It was like offering to an eager and a fiery horse a wide and swift career, while, faint at the far extreme, appeared a goal hung with prizes, which seemed to glitter, though dim and confused from the distance at which they were placed.

Morley hesitated not, but replied, his eyes for a moment lighting up with the fire which used once to be kindled so readily in them—"I will go willingly, Lieberg. It is, in fact, the scheme I had laid out for myself, only improved and brightened by having you for my companion. I have been ill since I have been here; but to-morrow they assure me I shall be ready to continue my journey."

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE TEMPTER.

"PROVIDENCE," says a powerful but dangerous author of another land—"has placed Disgust at the door of all bad places."

But, alas, she keeps herself behind the door as we go in, and it is only when we come out that we meet her face to face! The road to evil is undoubtedly a flowery path, smoothed down and softened with every care, so that no obstruction, no difficulty, may retard our steps, or keep us within the bounds of right. It is only when we would turn again that we discover the thorns.

Such may seem a strange homily wherewith to begin an account of the journey of Morley Ernstein and Frederick, Count Lieberg. It is nevertheless an undoubted fact, dear reader, that of all the many persons well calculated to smooth that high road to vice, of which we have just spoken, the young Baronet could have found none more dangerous than the man who, placed side by side with him, commenced, on the day following that with which we terminated our last chapter, a tour through lands where temptation is cheap, example abundant, and punishment rare—except, indeed, that silent punishment of the heart, the sentence of God's own law.

They sat side by side in Morley's carriage, turning over that of Count Lieberg to servants and baggage; for, as we have seen, Morley had no less than three men in his train—the courier, the groom, and good Adam Gray—while Lieberg was armed with a courier and a valet, so that they were plenty certainly to occupy both vehicles. The conversation between the two travelling companions was, of course, modified by the circumstances in which they were placed. It was no longer the wide, discursive, rambling play of fancy which had characterized their communications at an earlier period of their acquaintance, but it was full of deeper thoughts and feelings. It was no longer the even flow of a bright and sparkling rivulet, dancing rapidly on, uninterrupted by any obstacle, glistening over the pebbles of its bed, and whirling in murmuring eddies from the banks; but it was the mountain-torrent, amongst rocks and precipices, now pausing in deep silent pools, now dashing through stones and crags, and now plunging, in an eager cataract, over the edge of the precipitous cliff.

"Do you see that mother nursing her child, Morley?" he said, after a pause, as they drove through one of those small, miserable villages, to be found so frequently upon the road from Calais to Paris—"do you see yon mother nursing her child? Is it not a pretty sight?"

"I think it is," replied Morley, somewhat surprised at the sneering turn of the lip that accompanied his words.

"Ay," continued Lieberg, "it is indeed a sweet sight to see the sowing of hopes that go on from blight to blight, till all are blasted to the very root. For what is she nursing it, Morley? For sickness, and sorrow, and disappointment; for anguish of body and of mind; to find virtue become a curse, or pleasure alone in vice; for sin, crime, misery, and death, the grave and corruption, and hell hereafter! It is a sweet sight, indeed; and yet, if there be truth, either in Holy Writ, or in worldly experience, such is what we have just seen. The child was a girl, was it not?"

"I think so," replied Morley, gloomily.

"Poor thing!" said Lieberg—"the more her misery. Men can find pleasure, or, at all events, relief from their cares, if they are wise enough to seek it. Women are altogether slaves—their minds to prejudices, their bodies to passions or to follies. They are worse than any other slaves, the slaves of two masters—of man, and of vanity."

Morley replied not, and the conversation

dropped; but it is true, and therefore must be admitted, that the tone assumed by his companion was that which harmonized with the feelings in his own bosom, although he might see in many cases the falseness of his arguments, and the fallacy of all his deductions. Those feelings were of angry discontent, and he would not take the trouble to refute Lieberg, even where he perceived he was most wrong. It was like hearing a man who has deeply injured us accused of faults that he has not committed—too often do we listen, and internally dissent, but are silent, and perhaps are pleased.

After a pause of some minutes, Lieberg took up the same topic again, pointing out how superior was the situation of man to woman; but still the theme was, that man could drown every sorrow and every care by varying excitements. It was too pleasant a doctrine for Morley, in his state of mind at the time, willingly to resist, and he yielded gradually to the belief that the only course for him to pursue was, to drown the memory of Juliet Carr by anything that could occupy or interest him. He proposed to himself innocent objects, it is true; but where is the man who can gallop his horse headlong at a fence, and say that he will not leap it?

The first day's journey passed in such conversation as we have described, and the carriages paused at Beauvais, for the night. It was yet light; and to while away an hour ere dinner was ready, Morley Ernstein, without giving any notice to Lieberg, who had gone to another room, strolled out to the fine old cathedral, and entered those doors which, in Roman Catholic countries, are never shut against the worshipper.

He felt the influence of the place. The shady hour; the solemn arches; the sober hue of the building; the solitary lamp at a shrine on the other side; the kneeling figure of a woman, half hidden in the gloom; a receding step, that echoed along the vacant vault;—all made him feel inclined to stay and meditate; and the better spirit seemed to think her hour was come again, and lifted her voice to take the bitterness from his wounded heart. It was in vain, however, for the fiend was near him, and ere Morley had reached the end of the choir, Lieberg was by him, and his hand upon his arm.

How was it that he wiled Morley away from those contemplations, which were likely to lead him to higher and holier feelings than those which his counsels could inspire? It was by no light laugh—it was by no bitter sneer—it was by none of those means which he might have employed at another time. He knew that there was a spirit dwelt in the air of that place which would not suffer any method of the kind to succeed. He called Morley's attention, then, to the beauties of the building, he descanted upon columns and arches with the most refined and delicate taste, he destroyed the grand effect of the whole by engaging his companion's fancy in the examination of details, and, drawing him out of the church, after having taken a turn round it, he pointed to some of the grotesque ornaments, the grinning heads, and monstrous forms which found place in the architecture of that day, and then, and not till then, he ventured upon a sneer.

"See, Morley," he said, "how these people think fit to decorate the temples of their God, with heads of devils and serpents! Thus is it with us all, I fear; and if we were to look to the temple which we raise to God in our own hearts, we should find it as full of grinning fooleries as the outside of a French cathedral. The very image that we draw of him, nine times out of ten, if we could embody it, would be no better than the great idol of Juggernaut; and, alas! like that idol, we often make it, in bloody triumph, roll over a crowd of human things, crushing all sweet affections, and joys, and happiness, beneath the wheels of one superstition or another. Is it more drivelling or more foolish to ornament a temple like that with toads, and bats, and dragons of stone, than to suppose that the God who made us and gave us powers of enjoyment, should quarrel with us for using those powers, or tasting pleasure wherever we find it?"

"It must depend upon the kind of pleasure, Lieberg," replied Morley, somewhat sharply. "God will never quarrel with us, I am sure, for that which neither injures ourselves, nor other individuals, nor society in general—which neither degrades the spirit that he has given us, nor takes away from the glory of the giver. But it is a wide subject, Lieberg, which I will not discuss with you in my present mood; one thing, however, is very certain, that man's foolish imaginations can no more alter the nature of God, than those foolish ornaments can affect the prayers that are offered in sincerity beneath those walls. He has told us what he is, and with that we must rest satisfied."

Lieberg made no farther reply, for he was well aware, that one evil thought, that one dark doubt in regard to right and wrong, once implanted in the human mind, remains for its time buried in silence and apparent forgetfulness, till the summer day of temptation causes it to germinate and produce the richest harvest which a tempter can desire. He left the subject, therefore, where it was, and the following morning the two companions proceeded on their way towards the French metropolis.

They stayed not long in that capital, nor shall I pause upon all the events that occurred there. Lieberg took care that Morley should not want temptation, and it was not by any ordinary means that he stimulated him to yield to it.

Tools for any work are never wanting in Paris; a thousand accidents brought about a meeting between Morley and this fair lady, or that beautiful girl; and amidst the bright, the gay, and the fascinating, there were many willing and well-skilled to lead youth upon the flowery path of passion. A moment of strong temptation came, working itself up by various accidents like clouds gathering together for a storm. Lieberg watched it coming, and chose the precise moment when the whole fabric of Morley's good feelings and good principles tottered, for the purpose of making a great effort to overthrow them altogether; but he strove for it, not as other men would have striven.

It was a sombre evening, the moment of danger

he knew was to be towards nine o'clock that night, and Lieberg sought not to make his companion pass the hours in any occupation which might banish thought and reflection; on the contrary, it seemed as if a deep and heavy gloom had fallen upon himself; his conversation was of the darkest and desponding character; and, as they sat alone together, he skilfully called up every idea that might pile such a load upon Morley's heart and mind, as would impel him to anything in order to cast it off.

"Such evenings as this make me sad," he said, with his dark, bright eyes resting mournfully upon the young Englishman. "Autumn, indeed, is always to me a time of darkness. It is the death-bed of the year, and still, when I think how many pleasures have slipped by us untasted—how few will ever return again,—when I think of the emptiness of many things that I have sought and cared about, I feel a cloud come over my spirit that I would give worlds to disperse! What a difference, Morley," he continued, looking out of the window—"what a difference between this evening and that on which I some time ago met you in the park, with a beautiful girl hanging on your arm, and looking as if she loved you."

Morley shrunk as if he had been rending open his heart, and bent down his eyes upon the table, but Lieberg went on—"I, too, was happier then," he continued; "but those dreams fade, and I do believe, after all, that with women, the virtue and the high principle which we admire is but coldness of nature. They will be to all appearance as fond, as attached, as devoted, as may be, but put some small stumbling-block in their way, and we shall find that they will whirl all our happiness to the wind without a hesitation or a care."

Morley stretched out his hand to the Burgundy that stood by, with a sort of convulsive grasp, filled the tumbler to the brim, and drank it off without a pause.

"Give me the woman of passion," continued Lieberg—"she who yields to the impetuous torrent of her love without fears of the consequences or thoughts of the future—a thousand to one she betrays me, it is true, but still she is mine while I possess her, and she can never inflict upon me the pang of the cold-hearted, virtuous coquette, who raises love almost to a pitch of agony, and then disappoints it with an agony more terrible, verifying the Icelandic fable of the damned, whose torture is, to be first burned in the heart of Hecla, and then plunged into its eternal snows. There have been periods in my life, Morley, when I have felt more bitterly than you know of; and it is ever in such dull times as this that the memory of all which is sad and dark in the past comes upon me. I wish the Salon was opened; I think I could go and stake my last louis, to see if, by the gambler's feverish joy, I could cast off this oppressive weight upon my breast. Give me the wine, Morley, and let us have the windows closed—I love not the world nor anything in it!"

Thus went he on for some time in a tone of dark despondency, which made the moral poison that mingled with all he said ten times more potent and dangerous than when it came diluted with gayer things. Had he presented to Morley's mind the memory of Juliet Carr in all her purity and goodness, he would have called up a warning angel rather than a fiend; but it was the memory of sorrows alone that he recalled, of that anguish of mind which—as corporeal pain will sometimes drive the wretch, in a moment of madness, to fly to deadly poison for the repose of death—will often urge on the spirit to a thousand harmful things, even for a moment's relief.

As he proceeded, the load seemed to lie more and more heavy upon Morley's heart. At first it bore him down, and seemed to overpower him, but gradually he rose to struggle against it; the wine seemed to strengthen him; he took another and another draught, but then he paused, saying, he would drink no more. Already, however, it had produced some effect, not in intoxicating, not in clouding his senses, but in sending that fire through the veins which none but the Burgundian grape can produce. He became impatient of Lieberg's gloomy tone—he was glad when the clock struck nine.

"Ha! there is the hour," cried Lieberg. "Now will you come to the Salon, Morley? We shall find some excitement, at least, in those mischievous pieces of pasteboard."

"No," answered Morley, "I have an engagement to-night; my carriage must be by this time in the court;" and hurrying away to escape further question, the sound of wheels were heard the moment after.

A dark smile came upon Lieberg's countenance. He, too, went forth, but he was not absent more than an hour; and then, speaking a word to his valet as he passed, he walked into the sitting-room, and sat down to read. It was past one o'clock when the valet entered, suddenly saying—"That is his carriage now, sir."

Lieberg went out into the corridor, and passed Morley Ernstein, as, with a slow step, the young Englishman mounted the stairs. He gave him but a word of salutation, and hurried on; but Lieberg marked the haggard eye and the flushed cheek, and, entering his own bed-room, he stood silent for a moment in the midst of the floor, with a look of fierce triumph. It was as if he had won a great victory.

But there must have been a motive for all this. There was, and his words showed it: "He has fallen!" he cried—"he has fallen! The first plunge is taken! Who shall stop him now?—Neither Heaven nor hell. He shall go on—he shall go on! and ere many a year, I will show her this god of her idolatry as low and empty a licentious debauchee as any that crawls through opera saloons, or spends his days and nights between the gaming-table and the brothel!"

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE GOOD ANGEL.

At breakfast the following morning, the two travelling companions met again, and by that time a great change had come over the aspect

of Morley Ernstein. A change in a very small particular, but one so remarkable that it instantly struck the eyes of Lieberg, surprised and puzzled him. Morley was grave—perhaps one might say, sad—but there was a calm, a tranquillity in his grief which had not appeared in his demeanour since his parting with Juliet Carr. There seemed none of that bitterness, that struggling against the hand of fate, which had before characterized his sorrow: he was sad, as we have said, but he was no longer moody, indignant, and discontented.

Such had been his state up to the day before, and now the change which had come over him was produced by self-abasement. He no longer stood in the same proud position in his own eyes, he felt all his weakness, all the weakness of human nature, and his spirit was bowed down in humility before the will of God. He could no longer say—"I have deserved;" and although his sadness was increased by knowing that he had himself erred, yet it was a more wholesome grief than that which he had before experienced, and bitter repentance opened his heart, so that resignation could take the place of despair.

His demeanour puzzled Lieberg; he could not comprehend the change that he saw in Morley Ernstein; but the truth is, his own character was so different, that similar events would with him have produced the reverse result. His spirit was one neither to sorrow nor repent, and the consciousness of evil would but have made him raise his head to meet the avenger; he might bow, indeed, under the force of circumstances, but it was only for the purpose of an after struggle. He watched his companion attentively, then, but he commented upon nothing that he saw; he took no note of their conversation on the preceding evening, or of any events which might have followed, but he began in a lighter, though not a gay tone, asking Morley how he had slept, and adding—

"What a stormy night it has been."

"Indeed!" replied Morley; "I did not hear it."

"Innocence sleeps sound," said Lieberg, with a laugh—

> "'Virtue, without the doctor's aid,
> In the soft arms of sleep was laid;
> Whilst vice, within the guilty breast,
> Could not be physicked into rest.'

"Is it so, Morley? But after all, what conventional nonsense those poets write! Well may it be said that they deal in fiction, and their morality is not a bit more real than the rest. A pretty sort of morality, truly, one finds in all these moral poets, and other righteous personages; they think no more of manufacturing a falsehood to serve the cause of truth, as they call it, than a poor, honest, wicked man like myself thinks of drinking my cup of coffee. Now what a gross lie it is—so gross, indeed, as to be quite impotent—to tell us that virtue is happiness, and that innocence always sleeps comfortably. For my part, everything that I see around me makes me believe, that, in this world at least, virtue is more akin to misery than to happiness; and how many pangs and sorrows are there that from time to time disturb the repose of innocence, and break the rest of the purest and the best."

"That is true," replied Morley, thoughtfully. "Griefs may often break the sleep of innocence, but can vice ever repose, Lieberg? And as to the happiness or unhappiness of the good and the bad, thank God there is another world where things may be made even!"

"Your English proverb says," rejoined Lieberg, "that 'a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.' I would rather take out my stock of happiness here, my good friend."

"I have been thinking much over that subject this very morning," answered Morley, "and have made up my mind upon the matter, Lieberg."

"And to what conclusion?" asked his companion.

"That the balance even here is in favour of right," replied Morley.

"I am glad to think that you have got up such a comfortable philosophy," answered Lieberg, "for of late I have certainly seen that you are very sad, Morley, and I have striven to the best of my power, though somewhat vainly, to cheer you."

"I thank you for it deeply," replied Morley, extending his hand, "and I wish I had been wise enough to get up this philosophy, as you call it, before. You would not have found it, then, so difficult to soothe me, Lieberg."

"It is an excellent good philosophy," answered his companion; "and the only part of it with which I might be inclined to quarrel, my good friend, is the actual estimation of what is right and what is wrong, what is innocent and what is vicious. I do not take for granted the dictum of every would-be philosopher—no, nor of every puritan—when he tells me that a thing which makes me very unhappy, and does no harm to anybody, is a vice or a wickedness;—but there is no use of talking any more about it. Ethics are a very uncertain science; what's excessively wicked in one country is highly virtuous in another—polygamy is an honoured observance in Turkey. Dwindle it down to bigamy in England, and it becomes a great crime, for which you send the poor wretch to hard labour in a penal colony, as if the fool's act would not be punishment enough if we did but compel him to abide by the consequences, and live with the two wives at once."

Lieberg laughed aloud, half drowning Morley's reply—"The Christian has always a standard of morality, Lieberg."

The former, however, wished to pursue the subject no more, for he was satisfied with the advantages he had gained, and was well inclined to leave the boundaries of vice and virtue vague and undefined. He therefore turned the matter off with a jest, and as th ir breakfast concluded, demanded—"Well, Morley, what shall we do to-day?"

"For my part," answered Morley, "I shall quit Paris this very day; but I do not wish to influence your conduct, Lieberg, as you may have affairs to keep you here somewhat longer. I wish to be away from the place, and will wait

for you anywhere that you like, till you rejoin me."

Lieberg's eyes flashed with an angry expression for a moment, when Morley talked of leaving the French capital so suddenly; but the latter part of his companion's speech cleared his brow again, and he replied—"Nay, nay, I will go with you. I have nothing to do here, unless it were to take leave of some of the fair girls we know; but as you are in such haste, we will do without even that. Doubtless, as the poet says—

> 'Fresh freres will clear the bright blue eyes
> We late left swimming o'er.'"

All the arrangements were soon made, passports were signed, bills were paid, accounts were closed, horses were procured, and, ere night, Morley Ernstein and his companion were some miles on their way towards the banks of the Rhine.

It was rather late in the year for the German watering-places, and about one half of the company which, during the summer, had thronged the picturesque villages of Nassau and Baden had taken its flight towards greater cities. A number still remained, however, to linger out the last fortnight of the season, and roulette and rouge-et-noir, and certain select gambling parties, went on with only the greater vigour from the want of that excitement which the more extended society of the full season brought with it. It is just at that time of year that the arrival of strangers—especially if they come with some little display of importance—creates the greatest sensation, and it may be easily believed that the two handsome English carriages, the servants and the couriers which accompanied Morley and his companion, made many a head protrude itself from the windows, and many an idler gather round the vehicles. The appearance of those within them did not diminish the interest felt, and some questions were asked of the servants as to the names of the two gentlemen, which soon circulated amongst the inhabitants of the place. The dinner at the table d'hôte passed off pleasantly; Lieberg meeting with several persons whom he knew, and Morley being placed next to a most respectable-looking old German Baroness, with her white hair beautifully arranged round her fair though wrinkled face. Notwithstanding the melancholy which still hung heavily upon Morley Ernstein, the frank and lady-like manner of his fair neighbour at the board, soon seduced him into conversation, which the society of the young and the beautiful, perhaps, might have not been able to effect.

In the evening, he strolled with Lieberg into the great hall where the company had assembled, intending but to gaze for a moment at the splendour which such a place generally displays, and then to wander out into the walks round about, which had been cut with careful taste to give every attraction to the little town. Very different indeed was the scene presented from that which he had often witnessed before in a Parisian gaming-house. Roulette and rouge-et-noir were, it is true, going on in one part of the vast hall, and card-tables were to be seen laid out in another; but besides the parties occupied with such dangerous pursuits, there were various gay and glittering groups moving here and there, or seated at various tables taking different kinds of refreshment. A band was playing in the open space before the manifold windows of the building, the night was clear and warm for the time of year, and everything that heart could do had been done to render the scene splendid, and to banish thought by forcibly engaging the mind with a whole host of amusements.

Again Lieberg, as they moved onward, met with many acquaintances—some of them foreigners, some of them Englishmen. Indeed, in every place, and amongst every nation, he seemed to have friends, and he took care to introduce his young companion to all the most distinguished personages present; princes, and counts, and barons without number, and more than one noble lord whom Morley had often heard of as men of high repute, but had never met with before.

Not anxious for much society, Morley Ernstein, at length, disengaged himself from Lieberg, telling him that he was about to stroll out through the walks; but the moment after he was stopped by a fine-looking elderly man, of a fresh and pleasing, though somewhat melancholy, countenance, who held out his hand to him as an old acquaintance. After a moment's thought, Morley recollected the old nobleman whom he had met with in London, and to whom he had been introduced at the house of Mr. Hamilton. Well pleased at what he remembered of their conversation on those occasions, he returned his greeting warmly, and willingly sat down beside him for a few moments in one of the windows.

"I hope you are not in search of health, Sir Morley," said Lord Clavering. "You do not look so well as when I met you in London."

"Oh, no!" answered Morley; "my health is good; but I am seeking what most people seek, after they have found the uselessness of seeking happiness—I mean amusement. But I trust your lordship is not less fortunate in point of health, though I am afraid, from your asking me, that you yourself have been driven to these baths by some of the unpleasant ills of the flesh."

"Not exactly so," replied the old nobleman, "though I always think that mineral waters are medicines with which nature herself furnishes us for almost all diseases, if we do but apply them rightly. It is now many years ago since I myself received great benefit from these waters. I had just suffered a deep and terrible affliction which, through the mind, had preyed upon my constitution, and no one expected that I should ever recover. I was then a younger son, seeing life, as it is called, in the Austrian service. I accordingly threw up my commission, and was returning home to die in England, little cared for by anybody, and, to say the truth, caring little for anybody myself—except, indeed, one who has also been snatched from me since, by the inexplicable decrees of God. I paused, however, at this very place; and though at that time I thought life a very valueless possession, and was prepared, like Cawdor, 'To throw away the dearest thing I owed, as 'twere a careless trifle,' I remained here

for six weeks, and by so doing recovered health and life."

"And have you never had to curse the waters since?" asked Morley, gloomily, "and to wish that you had not tasted them?"

"No, my young friend," replied the old lord; "though I thought at that time, as you seem to think now; yet I have since had to bless them for affording me time to judge better of many things, and to learn submission to the will of the Almighty—nay more, for having left me to the enjoyment of many blessings, the calm sunshine of health and ease, and that degree of freshness of heart—notwithstanding some bitter sorrows and deep disappointments—which enables me still to feel many endearing affections, partaking, perhaps, less of the eager passions which are the portion of youth, but more of the permanent convictions of experience. I can now love worth," he continued, with a smile, "better than beauty, and seek in the companion of my later hours the friend rather than the mistress."

"I have been wrong, my lord," said Morley, "and gave way to a bitterness of spirit which I do not wish in general to indulge——"

At that moment Lieberg came up hastily, and spoke to his young companion in a low voice, saying—"Will you do me a favour, Morley? I know you hate play of all kinds, but I know also you do not care about losing a crown or two. The old Baroness Von L——, next whom you sat at dinner, is very anxious for a quotidian game of whist. She has pressed me into the service, and there is the old Prince of Naggerstein, but we cannot get a fourth, all we can do. Come, only sit down for one rubber. I hate that dull drivelling game as much as anybody, but I could not well refuse."

Morley rose and walked slowly to the table, feeling that it was utterly impossible he could take the slightest interest in any one of all the gambler's pursuits. In his eyes, rouge-et-noir was as stupid as whist, and whist as stupid as draughts. Of all the games that were ever invented, if he had been forced to choose one, it would probably have been marbles. He sat down to play, however: the old lady was charmed with his politeness; the Prince of Naggerstein was courtesy itself. Morley soon found that the stakes were enormously high, and that the two old opponents of Lieberg and himself were a couple of thorough-paced gamblers. Lieberg seemed to discover the fact at the same moment, and gave a warning look across the table towards Morley. He himself played well and carefully, but during the first rubber the young Englishman could not bend his attention sufficiently on the game, made several mistakes, and the two companions were losers of a very considerable sum.

"For Heaven's sake, Morley, be careful!" said Lieberg. "You have lost me five hundred louis by not playing up to my lead. We must have our revenge, however, for it is impossible to rise with such a loss as that. I understand the old lady's game now; only be careful, and we shall recover."

He spoke in English, which language the other two did not understand, and Morley, vexed with himself, continued at the table. He did now pay attention—nay, more, he became interested, eager. The dark bright eyes of Lieberg were fixed upon him sharply from the other side of the table, and Morley fancied that he read in them anxiety to see what he was about to play. It was, on the contrary, only to mark how far the gambling spirit of the place was getting a hold upon his mind. The scheme had been well arranged, and it was so far successful, that Morley felt that dangerous degree of excitement which he had never experienced before, the first symptoms of the growing disease—of that fell and terrible disease, which, when once it has taken full possession of any human being, never leaves him till it has destroyed him—the immedicable fever of the mind.

Once he raised his eyes from the table, and saw Lord Clavering standing opposite to him with a look of melancholy interest in his face. Morley averted his glance, and went on eagerly with the game, the impetuosity of his nature affecting him in this, as in all other pursuits, and carrying him on with a vehemence which he wished to restrain without being able. As his mind was clear and rapid, and his memory good, he played well now that he paid attention; Lieberg also managed his game with admirable skill, leading Morley on almost to the very last with the expectation of winning.

The end of the rubber was again approaching; Morley Ernstein had played, the Prince of Naggerstein had just made a trick; the result of the whole depended upon Lieberg's next card, and while he paused, as if in thought, Morley again lifted his eyes. Lord Clavering was still there, but another figure now stood beside him which made the young Englishman turn, for a moment, as pale as death. The next instant the blood rushed from his heart into his face and temples, he saw and understood nothing more of what had passed at the card-table, except that Lieberg had played, and that the game was lost.

Rapidly paying what the other party had won, Morley turned away, saying, in a determined tone, that he would play no more. Lieberg marked the look, and said, in a low voice to himself, "The time will come!" But the next instant, following Morley with his eyes, he saw him standing beside one of the most lovely creatures he had ever beheld, with a degree of agitation in the manner of both, which not even all the crowd that was around them could repress. The lady was dressed in deep mourning, but Lieberg had no difficulty in recognizing the same fair being whom he had once seen with Morley in the park, and with Lady Malcolm upon another occasion.

What were the sensations of Morley, as he stood beside Juliet Carr, and, with a low voice and beating heart, inquired into what had passed since he left her! Juliet was not less agitated than himself. It was evident that she was glad, not sorry to see him, though melancholy mingled with her joy, and she left the soft, fair, trembling hand in his as long as he thought fit to detain it. She told him that the cause of the mourning which he beheld was the death of her father, and those tidings it must be owned, produced but one sensation in Morley's heart. He had

respect for Juliet's grief, however, and for a moment or two bent down his eyes for fear glad hopes should sparkle up in them, and jar with her natural sorrow. In the brief pause that took place, Lord Clavering, who had stood by with Juliet's arm resting in his, watching with no slight interest, apparently, the agitation of his fair companion and her lover, disengaged himself from her, saying—"I will see if the carriage is there, Juliet. Sir Morley, will you take care of this lady till I return; I will not be long."

"Oh, Morley," said Juliet, the moment he was gone, "I have one great favour to ask of you—a favour that will make me as happy as anything can!"

"Name it, Juliet," replied Morley; "are you not sure that to make you happy I would sacrifice life itself?"

"Never sit down again to a table like that, Morley," said Juliet. "You know not the agony of watching one that we love with a countenance full of passions which only the dark spirits of this place can impart. Promise me, Morley—promise me, if you have ever loved me. You cannot tell what I have suffered within the last five minutes."

"I do promise you, Juliet," replied Morley; "but you know not what I have suffered during many weeks. I told you, Juliet, that I could not answer for what occupations I might seek, in order to cast off the misery which your loss inflicted on me."

"That which is wrong," replied Juliet, "depend upon it can but add gall to the well of bitterness. Oh, Morley, for my sake—for Juliet's sake—strive for better consolations. To know that you are happy, were the only happiness that I could now possess; and I am sure that such a heart as yours can never find anything but wretchedness in vice."

"I will trust," said Morley, "that the state of despair which might well drive me to any source of relief is to last no longer. Where are you to be found, Juliet? I will come early to-morrow; and you must then give me up at least an hour—to myself and by myself, Juliet."

She shook her head mournfully, but replied at once—"We are at the place called the Towers. Come if you like, but it is all in vain. I would fain be with you often, Morley—I would fain be with you always, to advise—to counsel, to soothe you; but it must be as a sister. I can never be more."

"This must be explained," answered Morley; but at that moment Lord Clavering again appeared, saying—"The carriage is here;" and at the same time offering his hand to Juliet to lead her from the hall.

Morley, however, would not give up his post till the last minute, and he himself conducted Juliet to the side of the carriage. He waited with a heavy heart and frowning brow, till the old nobleman, taking his seat by Juliet in the vehicle, ordered the coachman to drive to "The Towers." Then, after pausing moodily for a moment or two before the door of the building, he looked up into the sky, and, with a deep and long-drawn sigh, turned into the paths that wound away, through the woods, up towards the summit of the Hills.

CHAPTER XLV.

DISAPPOINTMENT.

NIGHT and meditation were friendly to Morley's spirit; he wandered on, rising higher and higher as he advanced, over the busy world of emptiness, of folly and vice, that he had just left in the great hall. The fresh breeze of the mountain played around his head, and quieted the feverish throbbing of his temples. He looked up to the Heavens, and saw star beyond star, till the deep blue sky seemed, to his intense gaze, to grow white with the multitude of brilliant orbs that shone forth from the very bottom of the depth. Was it possible that he could see that infinite immense of worlds without thinking of God, without wondering at the mightiness of his power, without asking himself if his goodness or his strength could ever fail, and without deriving thence powers of endurance—ay, and powers of resistance, too—which no other philosophy could have afforded?

The very sight of Juliet Carr, too—the very words that she had uttered, though their import was sad, and though not a ray of hope could be elicited from anything that she had said, woke the better spirit in the bosom of her lover, and led his thoughts on to higher and to holier things than those to which the earthly spirit would have prompted him.

"I will endure," he thought, "firmly, strongly, resolutely. I will endure with resignation, with submission, with the courage of a man, with the humility of a Christian. Juliet shall not grieve to see me plunge into those things which my own heart condemns. I will learn, once for all, whether there be any real and substantial obstacle between us; and if my life must be passed in sorrow and regret, I will not add remorse also to the burden."

He had now climbed high up the side of the hill, with nothing but the stars above him, and turning his eyes from them down upon the town below, he beheld the place where he had so lately sat, with the lights glittering from the manifold windows, and the music sighing faintly up to his distant ear. The sight and the sounds only filled him with disgust; and it was with regret that, after remaining for some time longer upon the hill, he took his way back again to the busy haunts of men.

On arriving at the inn, and entering the rooms which had been assigned to himself and Lieberg, he found considerable confusion and disarray. The cause was soon explained to him, for the moment after he appeared, his companion issued forth from the left-hand room, saying, with an eager look—"What say you, Morley, to a journey by night? I have just received intelligence which obliges me to set off for Munich immediately—every hour is of consequence. Will you come?"

Morley thought of Juliet Carr, and replied,

that he was sorry that he could not go—that it was impossible. Lieberg pressed him much, and seemed mortified that he would not consent; but his friend explained to him that he had made an engagement for the following morning which he could not break; and it was at length arranged that they should meet at Augsburg or Munich, Morley adding, with a faint light from hope still shining in his bosom—"If nothing should occur on either part to prevent it."

In less than half-an-hour the wheels of Lieberg's carriage rolled away, and Morley, finding that it was hopeless to attempt to sleep, sat up and read for some hours.

At length he retired to rest, and though he slept not for some time, yet his thoughts were calm. He determined that he would go early on the following morning to see Juliet Carr—that he would not wait for any formal time of visiting, although he saw that she was travelling with a party consisting of persons whom he believed to be nearly strangers to him; and he lay and revolved all that he would say and all that he would do, with the usual vain calculations of man, who never till the end of life learns to know that the very next minute is not his own. Thus passed the first four hours of the night, and then came a short period of repose, broken with thought running into dreams, and then came deep and profound slumber.

It seldom, if ever, happens that we can obtain sleep when we most require it, but the unbidden guest visits us at the times when we wish him most away. Morley Ernstein slept longer than he intended, but, nevertheless, it was not late when he woke; his watch pointed to a quarter to eight, and, starting up, he rang eagerly for his servant, intending to proceed upon his errand at about half-past nine. There was a note in the hands of old Adam Gray as he entered, and, as may be easily imagined, it was with some emotion that Morley opened it when he saw the hand-writing of Juliet Carr; but that emotion was greatly increased when he read the contents.

"We go early," she said; "and though I will never refuse to see you when you think fit to come, I am inclined to believe that it would be better you should not come to-day at all. I could say nothing, Morley, to console you. All that I could tell you would, perhaps, but make you the more unhappy. For me the dream of life is over, and I feel from what passed last night, that it agitates us both too much at present to meet frequently. I will not say 'too much for me,' because I resign myself entirely to my fate—it is fixed and determined—I hope nothing, I fear nothing, I expect nothing. There is only one thing that I pray for in this life, to know that you are happy, and never, by any chance, to have cause to think otherwise of you than I have always hitherto done. Such is my fate, Morley, and such must be the fate of every woman situated as I am; but with a man it is very different. Suffer the memory of these days to fade away—I do not say forget me, for that I think you will never do; but remember me only as one that is dead. Form other ties, open your heart to other attachments, and believe me, that I shall experience the only consolation that I can receive in knowing that your affection for me, and the bitter disappointment that we have both undergone, has not permanently affected the happiness, or in any degree changed the nature, of the man I love."

"When did this come?" exclaimed Morley, in a tone that made the old man start.

"About an hour ago, sir," replied Adam Gray. "I knocked at your door, but you were sound asleep."

Morley cast down the paper, dressed himself as rapidly as possible, and hurried out.

There were two or three people lounging quietly at the door of the inn called "The Towers," without any one of those signs and appearances which indicate to the eye of the experienced traveller that a departure is about to take place. There were no boxes in the passage, nor leather cases, nor cloaks and shawls, nor portfolios and drawing-books, the stray volume of a new romance, nor the couriers' innumerable straps and buckles. There were two or three men with whiskers, and one with mustachioes, and each bearing about him that indescribable something which points out the travelling servant; but they were all in a state of calm tranquillity; and Morley, by the whole aspect of the place, became convinced he was not, as he had feared, too late. He went into the house, then, and inquired of a person whom he met, and whom, from certain signs and symptoms, albeit as unlike an English innkeeper as possible, he took to be the master of the hotel, where he should find Miss Carr?

The man stared, and then replied, that there was no such person there. Morley next asked for Lord Clavering, which name immediately brought up a look of intelligence in the innkeeper's countenance; but the answer that instantly followed, at once damped the young Englishman's hopes.

"Oh, they are gone—they are gone!" replied the man. "They have been gone three quarters of an hour."

"Who do you mean by they?" demanded Morley.

"Why, the old my lord, and the lady, and the beautiful young lady, and all—maids and servants and couriers, and all," answered the host.

"Are you sure they are the persons I mean?" said Morley, with the last faint hope struggling up.

"I will show you their names in the book," rejoined the innkeeper; and, taking him into a small room at the side of the passage, he opened a huge book before him, and pointed to a long string of names, half way down the page.

Morley read, but he soon saw enough, for there stood the words—"Lord Clavering, Lady Malcolm, Juliet Carr." He turned away in silence, with his heart full of bitter thoughts, and, taking his way back to the inn, he gave but one order—"Let everything be prepared for departure."

"Do you know, sir," said Adam Gray, after hesitating for a moment or two—"do you know, sir, that Miss Juliet is here? I saw her maid this morning, in the street, and I did fancy that note came from her——"

Morley waved his hand impatiently, and the old man stopped. "She is gone," replied Morley Ernstein; "do as I told you, Adam."

"Will you not take breakfast, sir?" demanded the old servant, with a wistful look in his master's face.

"No, no!" answered Morley, impatiently; and Adam Gray quitted the room. He paused musing at the door, however, laying his finger upon his bald forehead, and muttering to himself—

"If I was sure it was she who is making him miserable—I would—that I would! But she never seemed to have any pride in her. What right had she, indeed? But I can't think it's her doing; she was always a good, kind young lady, as ever lived, and I am sure I thought she was fond enough of Master Morley, as well she might be. She won't find such another match in a hurry. But I'll watch, and see; she may be playing the fool after all, for there's no knowing about women—they are so devilish uncertain."

With this moral reflection old Adam Gray concluded his soliloquy, and went to give the orders with which his master had entrusted him, in regard to preparing for departure. Ere noon all was ready, and Morley, alone in his carriage, with his arms folded on his chest, his brow bent, and his hat pressed over his forehead, drove out of the little town, while many a foreign idler of the baths stood gazing at him, sneering at the gloomy aspect that they did not comprehend, and pointing him out as the true personification of English spleen.

Buried in the depth of his own thoughts, Morley cared little what comments were made upon his appearance. The brief glimpse he had had of Juliet Carr, the momentary revival of hope, had but plunged him into deeper gloom now that it was gone, and for a time all the better feelings which reflection had produced passed away, and left him as bitter in spirit as ever. There was one strong, predominant determination, however, in his mind, which was, to seek another meeting with Juliet wherever she had gone; to induce her to give him reasons for her conduct; to make her speak plainly why she debarred him and herself of hope, why, if she loved him, as she did not deny that she did, she made him miserable now that her father's death had removed his opposition to their union.

Such were the feelings with which he went on through the wild valleys and deep ravines that led him back to the banks of the Rhine.

All those who have travelled along the banks of the Rhine—and few there are who have not done so, now-a-days—know well, that though, perhaps, the Rhone presents more picturesque beauties, there is scarcely any spot on earth where, to loveliness of scenery, are joined so many thrilling memories, and such a wide extent of associations. Well might it be called the Storied Rhine; for there is not one step along its banks which has not its history; and from the ages of the Roman domination, down to the "Now," when the stranger stands beside it, there is scarcely a year in the wide course of time, which has not marked the Rhine by some great event. He, indeed, must have become dead to life, or never have been alive to half the wonderful things that life presents, who can wander by the side of that mighty river, without giving himself up to dreams of the past—ay, and perchance of the future.

Morley Ernstein was neither; and though the tone of his own feelings, of course, gave a colouring to all his thoughts, yet his meditations on the things around him soon became deep and long, and in those meditations he himself found relief.

Thus passed the next four days, but, as he went from inn to inn, he perseveringly strove to trace the road that Juliet Carr had taken. Once only, however, he met with the name of Lord Clavering, with the words, "and party," attached to it; and he knew not why, but a painful feeling that Juliet Carr should be included in the party of another passed across his mind. He strove to banish it instantly; he asked himself, with a sort of scornful smile, if he were jealous of Lord Clavering; but still the idea continued painful; and now, convinced that Juliet had taken the same road which he was following, he simply pointed out the name of the party to his courier, and directed him to search for it in the inn-books, and let him know when he found it again.

CHAPTER XLVI.

A REFORMED BURGLAR.

When the fall of Napoleon Buonaparte had opened the gates of Europe to the little body of islanders who had been knocking at them for so many years in vain, the first that rushed in to see all the wonders of the great continental fair, were, of course, the great and the wealthy, having every means at hand to satisfy to the full the expectant innkeepers and postilions, who were well prepared to make the purses of our good countrymen pay for the sights which had been so long forbidden. But in the rear of these, only by a very short distance, came a number of very respectable people of an inferior class, who were firmly resolved to have their holiday also, and that it should be spent on the Continent. The means of locomotion, indeed, were not so plentiful then as now; no steamboats bridged over the Straits of Dover; no railroads saved one the trouble of seeing anything in Europe without depriving one of the pleasant consciousness of making a tour. People set out actually to travel in those times; and many a worthy citizen of London contemplated the journey to Paris with as much wild excitement, and strong sense of personal enterprise and merit in braving danger, as did Le Vaillant, or Bruce, or Cook, or any other traveller of past days.

To facilitate them in their undertaking, however, there was established, at a house on the eastern side of the Haymarket, what may be called a depôt of *vetturiers*, where a man was almost always to be found or heard of, ready, for a specified sum, to carry any lady, gentleman, or child, who might be locomotively disposed, from one part of Europe to another. In truth, the manner of travelling was not at all

an unpleasant one, and being then in its first freshness, fewer tricks were played upon the traveller, more conveniences provided for him, and the rogues and vagabonds with which Europe is superabundantly supplied, had not then fully discovered that the trade of *voiturier* was one which afforded them great facilities for the exercise of their talent.

It was one day, then, in the month of September, a short time after various events had taken place which have been related in this true history, that a Swiss *voiturier*, ready, for any man's money, to go to any part of the civilized world, was standing in the shop in question, having left his horses and carriage in the good town of Calais and come over to England, for the express purpose of seeing what the English could be about, that nobody had hired him up to that late period of the year. The master of the house expressed himself not a little grieved that such was the case, but assured him that he had not had one single application, and was in the very act of counselling him to go back to Switzerland empty, when a tall, powerful, and good-looking man, dressed in black, and with a very pretty and lady-like young woman leaning upon his arm, entered the shop, and made some inquiries, which instantly caused the Swiss to raise his ears, and listen with great attention.

His knowledge of the English language was certainly very limited, but at the same time he understood the meaning of the word carriage, and was well aware that the word Naples, though somewhat different from the Italian name of the place, was applied by us Englishmen to the City of the Syren. He soon found, then, that the gentleman was bargaining to be carried, lodged, and boarded by the way, from the town of Calais to that of Naples. He, moreover, understood that two ladies and a child were to be of the party, so that four places, out of the six which his vehicle afforded, might be speedily secured. He perceived, likewise, that the gentleman made his bargain shrewdly and strictly —in fact, as a man accustomed to deal with a world which has rogues in it; and as he thought he saw an inclination on the part of the master of the shop to risk losing a customer by demanding too much, he hastened to join in to the best of his abilities, and make his bargain for himself. His next discovery was, that the gentleman in black could not speak a word of any language but his own; and that the lady who was with him could only converse in French of a certain sort; but after about three-quarters of an hour's discussion, the whole matter was arranged satisfactorily, and the Swiss set off again for Calais, to prepare for a journey to Naples, to which city he was to convey the party of travellers, upon terms set down in a written agreement.

When all had been settled, the two future travellers took their way through the streets of London to one of the small houses, which, placed in the neighbourhood of the more fashionable parts of the town, afford to the younger and poorer branches of distinguished families many a convenient residence at no great expense.

"No. 15, did you not say, Jane?" said the gentleman, addressing the lady on his arm. "It seems a wonderfully nice house; I wonder how that is kept up."

Knocking as he spoke, he asked the servant who appeared—a man in mourning livery—if Miss Barham were at home. But even while he was putting the question, the door of what seemed a dining-room opened, and a distinguished-looking elderly man, apparently not in the best health, came out, saying, to some persons within—"Well, gentlemen, all I can say is, that he shall hear the whole particulars. You have dealt candidly with me, in showing me the deeds, and, without giving an opinion on the case, I will promise you to communicate the whole facts fairly."

As he came forth the door was closed, and the servant who was in the passage drew back to give him egress.

"That is Mr. Hamilton, the famous banker," observed the gentleman in black, in a whisper, to his fair companion—"a very good man, they say."

At the same moment the servant replied, that Miss Barham was at home, and ushered the two up to the drawing-room, while a great deal of loud talking, with evident haste and eagerness, was heard from the chamber which they passed on the right.

"What name shall I give, sir?" demanded the servant at the drawing-room door.

"Martin," replied the stranger; and the moment after Mr. and Mrs. Martin were announced, in a loud tone.

In an elegant, though somewhat small drawing-room, with everything which could contribute to comfort and convenience around her, sat Helen Barham, not less beautiful than ever, though with a deep shade of melancholy hanging upon her fair brow, and a colour, almost too delicately lovely, in her cheek. She raised her eyes as the man threw open the door, and then started up with a look almost of alarm, paused, and hesitated till the servant was gone, and then, with one of her radiant smiles, chasing away the cloud, like the sun at noon, she pointed to a chair, saying—"I am glad to see you—pray sit down. I know not what startled me, but the name brought back painful memories."

"I do not wonder at it, ma'am," answered Harry Martin—"though, after all, I think, if I were you, it would bring up the proudest and happiest memories that could come into my heart. Memories of having done, Miss Barham, what there are not two people in all Europe would do—ay, not only of having saved a fellow-creature from death, but of having saved him from perhaps worse destruction. I have come to thank you, ma'am—and my poor wife, too; and the first name we shall teach our baby to pray for is yours—isn't it, Jane?"

Jane Martin went round the table, and dropping upon her knees beside Helen Barham, kissed her hand, and bathed it with tears.

"Oh, no, no!" cried Helen, trying to raise her. "Pray do not do so!—you agitate—you distress me. I did but keep the promise I had made."

"Ay, ma'am, and nobly," replied Harry Martin; "give me those that *do* keep their word in this world of promise-breakers. But Jane has got something to tell you, she will say it better than I can, for such words are so new in my mouth that they come rather awkwardly."

Helen turned an inquiring look towards Jane Martin, who had now risen, and was standing by her side, wiping away the tears that the sweet feelings of gratitude had drawn forth. "He means me to tell you, madam," said the latter, "something that I am sure, if I judge you rightly, will repay you for all you did and all you suffered on that terrible day at York. He has determined, madam, more out of gratitude to you and one other, who has befriended us, too, in our time of need, to change his way of life altogether. We are going to a far country, ma'am, as far from England as we can get, without going out of Europe; I mean to Naples, where I had once an uncle, who is, I believe, living still. There we may do honestly and industriously, and, if possible, in time, will pay back everything that is not rightly ours."

"Oh, do so!—do so!" cried Helen, gladly; "the blessing which that very thought will give you, will be worth any other kind of happiness."

"I begin to think so too, Miss Barham," replied Harry Martin; "and one thing more I will say, which is, that I know what will make me the happiest man alive."

"What is that?" said Helen; "I am sure if it be possible for me to help you I will. I cannot forget that, besides sparing my life when many other people would have taken it, you aided to deliver my brother from the power of those who would have most basely used the means of injuring him which they possessed. Tell me what it is; I am far more capable of doing something to show my gratitude now, than I have ever been before, and if money——"

"No, no!" exclaimed Harry Martin, "it is not money that I want, Miss Barham! All I wish for is an opportunity of serving you. But do you know, Miss Barham," he added, after a moment's pause, "I am almost sorry to hear you have money to spare."

"Why so?" said Helen, in some surprise.

"Why, I don't know well how to tell you what I mean," replied Harry Martin; "but it's this, you see, Miss Barham: from what I know, I don't see how you or your brother can have much money to spare, if he gets it in a way that may not some time or another bring you into a worse scrape than the last."

Helen Barham's habit of blushing had not been lost, even in all the painful scenes she had lately gone through, and the blood came warm into her cheek at the man's words, though she knew that they were not intended to offend or pain her. There was something in them, however, which caused her mind instantly to refer to her late position—to the position of danger and temptation in which she had been placed when first she was presented to the reader's eyes—and the very thought made the true modesty of her young and candid heart shrink as if from contamination.

"You are mistaken, in this instance," she said, mildly; "a great change has taken place in our situation. I cannot tell you all the particulars, for I do not know them; and, indeed, I believe on some account I have been purposely kept in the dark—but it has been discovered that a large property rightly belonging to my brother has been kept from him. It was old Mr. Carr who first told me of the facts; since then, the matter has been referred to several London lawyers, who are so perfectly convinced the property cannot be withheld any longer, that the solicitor is quite willing to advance my brother any money that he needs—more so, indeed, than I could wish—for William is yet too young to use it rightly."

"He'll never be old enough," replied Harry Martin; "but, however, whatever is for your good is a blessing; and I trust, notwithstanding, though God may give you, young lady, the fortune you well deserve, I shall some day be able to show you my gratitude. I won't ask to see your brother, Miss Barham, for the meeting would not be very pleasant to him or to me, but I can tell him one thing, if he would have health or happiness either, he must live a very different life from that which he was following when I knew him. Why, we ourselves, who did not stick at a trifle, as you may well suppose, used to get sick of his way of going on."

Helen Barham cast down her eyes, and for a moment or two made no reply. It was painful enough for her to think that her brother should ever have been the companion of the man who stood before her; but to hear that even the profligate, the lawless, and the reckless, were outdone by the son of her own mother was terrible indeed. Her silence, however, arose from other sensations, likewise produced in her bosom by the words of Harry Martin. The stores of the past, the things that have been—ay, and the things that are—are often garnered up in our hearts like the inflammable substances of a magazine, apparently cold and lifeless, but requiring only a spark to blaze forth. That spark is frequently a mere accidental word; a look, a tone will sometimes communicate the flame. There had been a deep anxiety preying upon Helen Barham for some weeks, a new anxiety, a fresh grief, which mingled with all the other painful feelings in her bosom, and produced a sort of dread, which cast an additional gloom over every prospect. She had remarked in her brother a bright red spot in the pale cheek, increasing towards nightfall, an eye full of unnatural lustre, a hurried and fluttering respiration, a slight but frequent cough—all of which she had seen once before in another, a few months previous to the time when the turf was laid upon her mother's head. She had questioned him eagerly and often; she had endeavoured to prevent him from committing excess in various ways, but he had always insisted that he was quite well, and any attempt to restrain his inclinations seemed but to irritate him, and to drive him to wild extremes. Lately she had tried hard, and successfully, to shut out his state of health from her mind: she had kept the truth at a distance; but the words of Harry Martin not only opened her eyes, and showed

her that her brother was hurrying on towards death, but that it was his own deed.

"I fear," she said, in reply—"I fear that his health has suffered very much! Indeed, he is anything but well; and I trust, when all this business is settled, to induce him to try a better climate."

"Induce him, Miss Barham," said Harry Martin—"induce him——"

He was going to add—"to try a better life," but he gazed in the fair face of Helen Barham, saw the deep melancholy that overspread it, and felt afraid that he might add one drop more of bitter to the lot of her, who, born with every endowment of person and mind which the prodigal hand of nature could bestow upon a favourite child, had been placed in circumstances where beauty was peril, where excellence was trial, and where tenderness was anguish. He would not add another word, but paused in the midst of what he was saying, and then turned abruptly to his wife exclaiming—"Come, Jane, let us go, we are only keeping Miss Barham. God bless you, madam, and protect you. May you find kind friends wherever you go, and may every one be as honest to you as you have been to me. God bless you, I say, and make you happy, and give me some opportunity of helping you when you need it."

Thus speaking, he turned away and left the room, followed by his wife; and Helen, bidding them adieu, resumed her occupations.

They had not been long gone, however, when her brother came in, with his face flushed and excited, and a look of triumph in his countenance. "I have him," he said—"I'll do for him, Helen! We have got hold of the only admission that was wanting. I'll make a beggar of him before I have done with him!"

"I hope not, William," answered Helen, reproachfully. "I hope you will make a beggar of no one upon the earth. You, of all people, William, ought to know how terrible a thing it is to be a beggar. But who is it you are talking of?"

"Ay! that I shan't tell you, Helen," replied William Barham with a laugh. "I know you'd be for interfering, and that wouldn't do. The business is my own, and I'll manage it myself. You shall know nothing about it till it's all done; and who can tell if the matter may not be more for your advantage than you think."

"Well, William," rejoined Helen, with a sigh, "as I said to you yesterday, if you do not tell me more, tell me nothing. But listen to what I have to say to you. The man, Harry Martin, who was tried at York, has been here to thank me. You know very well that he took, and destroyed, those papers which were so dangerous to you. Now, I think, as you say you have money to spare, you ought to send him some immediately."

"Not I," cried William Barham, though his face for a moment had become very pale. "You say he destroyed the papers. He can't do anything against me, then—I shall send him no money. You were a fool for not letting him be hanged," and he turned sullenly from her, and left the room.

Helen Barham leaned her head upon her hand, pressed her handkerchief upon her eyes, and wept bitterly.

CHAPTER XLVII.

A MOUNTAIN STORM.

THE night was dark and tempestuous, the rain beat violently against the windows of the carriage, the wind blew so vehemently as to shake it upon the springs, and the hollow moanings of the gale, as it swept down the valley of Treisam, sounded like the screams of souls in torture. Once or twice, but once or twice only, the features of the scene around were displayed for an instant by a sudden flash of lightning, and rock, and chasm, and rushing stream, swelled into a torrent by the deluge that was pouring down, started out from the darkness and instantly disappeared again. The effect was fine, but awful; and for the sake of postilions and servants, Morley Ernstein would have willingly turned back, but that the storm did not commence till Frieburg was left far behind, and had not reached its height till the carriage was nearly half way through the pass, known by the gloomy name of the Valley of Hell. To go on, then, was a matter of necessity, and Morley contented himself with calling old Adam Gray into the inside of the carriage, to shelter his white hair from the storm of night. The journey, indeed, was not without danger, for the pit of Acheron was certainly never darker than the Höllen-Thal, in the intervals of the lightning; and the windings of the road, amongst rocks and streams, are conducted with a greater regard to brevity than to the traveller's neck.

"It is a dreadful night, indeed, sir," said good old Adam Gray, with a shudder, "and it seems to be a terribly wild country. Why, the carriage can scarcely get on, and I believe will be broken in pieces before we get to the end of the stage."

"Oh, no!" replied Morley; "it is too well built for that, Adam; and the darkness makes you think every jolt worse than it is. Through this very valley General Moreau made his famous retreat, bringing with him his baggage and artillery, so it is impossible that it can be so very bad."

"It's bad enough, sir, any way!" exclaimed Adam Gray, as the carriage passed over an immense stone, producing a jolt that nearly knocked the heads of the travellers against the top of the vehicle. "I would almost sooner be a cannon than a Christian to go through here—at least in this dark night!"

"I certainly should have waited till to-morrow," replied Morley, "if I had known we should have such a storm, but now it is not to be helped, and the stage, I believe, is not a very long one. We must sleep where we can for to-night, as there is no use of attempting to go on to Schaffhausen."

The way, however, seemed to Adam Gray interminably long, for the German drivers, with

very proper caution, proceeded at a rate certainly somewhat slower than that with which an English broad-wheeled waggon wends its way along the drawing-room roads of our own favoured land. At the end of about an hour the storm decreased, the sharp gusts of wind ceased almost entirely, the lightning no longer illuminated the valley from time to time with its fierce glare, and the rain itself subsided into a thin and drizzling mist, through which the lamps of the carriage poured a red and confused light, occasionally catching upon some wild rock, or bringing forth from the darkness the large boll of some old tree, but generally showing nothing but the dim expanse of vapour which wrapped the harsh features of the valley in a foggy shroud.

How long they had thus gone on through that tempestuous night, Morley Ernstein did not know, but he judged by guess that the next post-house could not be far off, when the sound of what seemed a distant call met his ear, and, turning to old Adam Gray, he said—"Well, Adam, your rough journey will soon be over; we must be coming near Steig, for I hear voices, and some persons shouting."

"Perhaps some one has got hurt in this terrible night," replied Adam Gray. "God send us well out of this horrid place!"

Morley Ernstein listened eagerly, for the old man's words brought suddenly into his mind the very probable case of some accident having happened in such a storm and such a scene; and, letting down the window, he put his head out, gazing round to see if he could descry anything, but in vain.

A moment or two after, however, a loud shout from the right, and at no great distance, showed that the lamps of the carriage, though of no great service either to the travellers or the postilions attached to it, had sent their glare far enough into the gloom of the valley to reach the eyes of some person in distress. The shout was repeated again and again, and Morley thought that he distinguished an English tone and English words, though let it be remembered that such sounds may very well be heard in Germany, without the speakers being Englishmen or knowing one syllable of our native tongue. This Morley recollected, but, nevertheless, he was just as anxious to give assistance as if he had been quite sure that the persons calling for aid were his fellow-countrymen.

The postilions, although they must have heard the cry fully as well as those within the carriage, did not seem in the slightest degree disposed to stop, but went on with the same indifferent jog-trot, which probably they would have continued if the father of each of them had been drowning in the stream below. Three times did Morley himself call to them before they condescended to pay any attention. They at length brought up, however, and quietly asked what was the matter. Without waiting to inform them, but bidding the servants get down to aid him, Morley sprang out of the vehicle, drew one of the lanterns with his own hands from the socket, and called aloud, in very good German, to ascertain where were the personages who had been so vociferously appealing for help.

The reply left him no doubt as to its being an Englishman who now spoke, for the very first sentence was adorned with one of those oaths which unhappily are but too often in the mouths of our countrymen. "Holloa! hoy!" cried the voice. "D—n you, if you don't make haste you will be too late! This way, I say—this way!"

It was not without some difficulty, however, that any means were found of reaching the spot from whence the voice proceeded. The bank was steep and rugged, large masses of rock and stone obstructed the way, and the darkness of the night, increased by the mist, prevented Morley Ernstein and his servant from seeing more than a few yards even by the aid of the lantern, which the young gentleman himself carried. All this delayed them much, but still they advanced, guided by several voices talking rapidly and eagerly together; and bad French and bad English were to be heard spoken in sharp and sometimes angry tones, between people who seemed to have a very great difficulty in making themselves mutually understood.

At length, however, the exact place where all this was going on became more distinct; and the forms of two men, two or three women, a child, four horses, and an overturned coach, were seen against a background of white spray and foam, occasioned by the stream—now swelled, as I have before said, into a torrent, and dashing in angry fury against the crags and rocky fragments which encumbered the valley. The men and most of the women were all gathered closely round the carriage, and seemed to be holding on thereby as if endeavouring to move it, while one of the group was giving eager orders to another, in a somewhat extraordinary compound of English and French, to attach the horses to the overthrown vehicle in a particular manner, and endeavour to pull it up; while the man to whom he spoke seemed to have taken the wise resolution, in the first place, of not understanding him, and in the next place, of not doing what he was told when he did.

Such was the state of things when Morley Ernstein approached within a few yards of the carriage, and perceived that the vehicle, and whatever it might contain, was certainly in a very dangerous position, being balanced as nicely as can be conceived, upon the edge of a second bank, and apparently only kept from falling over into the stream by the weight of the persons who held it down. Such was the first fact that presented itself to Morley's mind; but there was another point which struck him nearly at the same time—namely, that the figures of two, at least, out of the personages in the group, were quite familiar to him; and the combination of the voice which he had heard, with the appearance of the people now before him, instantly brought to his recollection our old acquaintance Harry Martin, and his wife. The latter, it would seem, instantly recognized the young Baronet in the person who now came to their aid, for at the very moment that Morley recognized her husband, she exclaimed—"Oh, how fortunate! It is Sir Morley, Harry—it is Sir Morley Ernstein!"

"That is luck, indeed!" cried Harry Martin. "We shall now have somebody to help us."

The matter was soon explained; the Swiss driver of the vehicle in which Martin had engaged a certain number of places for himself and his family, had, in the darkness of the night, mistaken a small cart-road on the right, for the highway to Steig, had soon become embarrassed amongst the rocks, and had ended by overturning the carriage in the most dangerous part of the valley.

"The worst part of the whole job, is," said Harry Martin, "that the old woman is a good deal hurt, I am afraid; and we couldn't get her out of the carriage, as it lies there. I had nobody to help me but this d—d fellow, and he will not help at all."

With the aid of Morley and his servants, the vehicle was soon freed from the dangerous situation in which it hung, and drawn back into the bad cart-road from which it had strayed. The jolting, however, was so terrible to poor old Mrs. More—who had, as her son-in-law declared, received considerable injuries—that she now very willingly agreed to do that which she had at first refused, and quit the rough and ill-hung coach for Morley's more comfortable conveyance.

Finding that the distance to the post-house was not more than an English mile, the young Baronet determined to go the rest of the way on foot, sending only one servant with his carriage, and giving the places thus left vacant to the women, whom he had found in such a deplorable situation in the valley. Harry Martin's wife and the little boy took their seats beside old Mrs. More, in the inside. There was room for another behind, but there were still two persons to be provided for, both foreigners—one seeming the mistress, and the other the maid. The lady, however, insisted that her attendant should go, saying—"You are bruised, Marguerite, and I am not; I can walk very well."

The attendant needed no great pressing, but took her place at once, and Morley Ernstein, offering his arm to her mistress, gave directions to his courier to remain with the Swiss, in order to aid him in getting his carriage safely back into the main road, and then proceeded, with Harry Martin on his right hand, talking sometimes to one of his companions, sometimes to the other. The lady spoke very little English, but French she understood thoroughly, although her accent betrayed the tones of a southern land; and, now that the danger was over, she laughed with light-hearted gaiety at the misadventures of the night, though a tone of sadness mingled every now and then with her merriment, when she mentioned the situation of the poor old lady, Mrs. More. The impression produced by her conversation upon the mind of Morley Ernstein was altogether agreeable; and indeed it must be a hard case, where a young and graceful woman and a young and accomplished man, finding their way on together along a road they do not know, in a dull and drizzly night, dislike each other very much in the end.

The mind of Harry Martin seemed, for the time, wholly taken up with the accident which had happened to Mrs. More, for whom he apparently entertained as much affection as if he had been her son. Although he in no degree affected to have forgotten Morley Ernstein, and spoke to him in a tone of respect—perhaps one might say, of gratitude—yet he referred, not even by a word, to the circumstances of their previous acquaintance. Morley himself kept aloof from any such topic also, on account of the proximity of his servants' ears, though he determined, if occasion served, to inquire into all which had lately occurred to his companion, and to ascertain by what train of events he now found him in a remote part of Germany, with his wife and family. The opportunity was soon given to him. On their arrival at Steig, they found the little post-house full of bustle and confusion. Poor Mrs. More had been taken out of the carriage, and removed to bed, it having been found that her leg was broken in two places. Her daughter was in the room, attending upon her, with no little distress of mind; and the fair Italian, who had accompanied Morley Ernstein—though there was evidently a little struggle in her breast as to whether she should stay below in the hall, and pass the evening with the young English gentleman, or go up and give what assistance she could to the sufferer up-stairs—decided, at length, in favour of the more amiable, though less pleasant occupation. Bidding Morley a graceful good night, she left him and Harry Martin in possession of the great, odd-shaped room, which is almost always to be found on the lower story of a German inn, and proceeded to the chamber of Mrs. More, where, we may as well add, in passing, she showed much good humour, and benevolent attention, aiding Jane in putting her child to bed, and soothing and tending her mother.

In the mean time, Morley Ernstein's servants busied themselves in preparing their master's room, taking care of the carriage, and removing a part of the contents to the house; while the courier paid the postilion within a few florins of the sum he intended to charge his master, ordered the best of everything for his own supper, and the next best for that of Sir Morley, and looked into the saloon three times to see what the young gentleman was about, and to prove that he was very attentive.

On the part of Sir Morley Ernstein, the first proceeding was to send for the post-master, and to inquire where a surgeon could be procured. No good one was to be heard of nearer than Frieburg; and, accordingly, a man on horseback was sent off by Sir Morley's directions, to bring the best bone-setter that the capital of the Briesgau could afford. Then—after various inquiries as to the real situation of the old woman, after some going to and fro between her chamber and the saloon, and all the little bustles, orders and counter-orders, inquiries and replies, examinations and discoveries, precautions, preparations, and annoyances, which attend the first arrival at an out of the way inn, on a dark and rainy night, after a journey of adventures and mishaps—after all this was concluded, I say, Morley Ernstein leaned his arm upon one side of the large china stove, while Harry Martin stood upon the other, with his arms crossed upon his broad, bull-like chest.

"You see, Sir Morley," said the latter, at length, as if in explanation of his feelings towards Mrs. More—"you see, that I am very anxious about this old woman, for she has been kind to me ever since I first knew her, and ended by saving my life. She was the first one, sir, that ever made me think—love being out of the question—that any one could care about me for myself, and she has always kept tight to the same way of acting by me; though, God knows, little was the good I ever did her or hers! However, I am sure I ought to be well contented with the world, for when I was at the hardest pinch that ever man was at, I found people to be generous to me, people to be true to me, and people to be zealous for me, which, altogether, was what saved my life, when I as much deserved to be hanged as any man that ever was born."

"How was that?" demanded Morley Ernstein, not doubting, indeed, the truth of Harry Martin's confession, but merely desirous of hearing something more of his history. "I left you in a fair way of making your escape, I thought."

"Ay, sir, so you did," replied his companion, "but I was fool enough to put my foot in a trap, and was caught. I should have been hanged, too, if it hadn't been for that noble girl, Miss Helen Barham, who should be a queen if I had my will. She kept her word with me in spite of all that any one could say, and she'll go to heaven for it, if it was for nothing else, for she's given me time to think and to change my life altogether, and that's what the law would not have done. My wife was reading me the Bible, the other day, where it says—'There's joy in heaven over one sinner that repents;' and if it be so, which I don't pretend to doubt, she must have made the place very happy—which, indeed, I suppose it was before—for certainly I was as bad as I could be, but now I have repented a good deal, and mean to do so a great deal more. It would not have been the case, sir, if it happened any other way at all; if they had hanged me, I should have died game; and if I had got off by some trick of the lawyers, some flaw in the indictment, or something of that kind, I should have been at the old work again in a week; but to see that beautiful girl sit there, badgered by the judge and all the lawyers, and quietly make up her mind to go to prison sooner than to break her word with a man like me,—why, sir, it changed my whole heart in a moment; and I thought to myself, if I get off this time I will lead a different life altogether for your sake, you angel, just to show you that I'm not altogether so bad as people think!"

By degrees, Morley Ernstein obtained a general idea of all that had occurred to Harry Martin, since he left him in the north of England. It was not with little interest that the young Englishman questioned him concerning Helen Barham, and we need hardly say that it was with pleasure he heard, not only her praises from the man beside him, but an account of the actions which had called forth his gratitude. It was with great satisfaction, too, he learnt that a change had taken place in her pecuniary affairs, and that competence, if not wealth, was at all events assured to her, for though he had written to Mr. Hamilton about her before he left England, and placed her future fate beyond doubt, he was not a little pleased to find that she would be dependent upon no one. The relative situation into which they had been thrown, the high qualities of her mind, the compassion that he had felt for her—ay, the very temptation which had at one moment assailed him, had left a tenderness in his feelings towards Helen Barham, which was certainly not love, and yet was something more than friendship. It was a sensation, strange, complicated, difficult to be defined even to his own mind; it was the blending of many memories and many sweet impressions into something like the affection of a father for a child, something like the love of a brother for a sister, and yet differing from both, inasmuch as there was nothing conventional in it, inasmuch as there was no bond or tie of duty, inasmuch as it differed from the common forms and modes into which the rules of society shape our feelings as well as our actions.

The presence of such sensations in his bosom was rendered more sensible to him by the conversation taking place at that moment, than it had ever been before, and he paused for some short time thinking that it was all very strange, and inquiring into the nature of the things within him. The man Martin, in the mean time, remained beside him, with his keen, intelligent eyes fixed upon his countenance, apparently reading, or attempting to read, the thoughts that were busy in his breast.

At length he said—"Well, Sir Morley, I am going to bid you good night, and I thank you very heartily for all the kindness you have shown me. There's one thing I can't help saying, however—and you must not think me impudent or meddling for saying it, though I must not mention any names—but I can't help thinking, sir, that you have thrown away your own happiness, and quitted the good, and the true, and the beautiful, to follow one that you'll find out some day, perhaps, when hope, and comfort, and peace are all ruined together. Forgive me for saying it, sir, but I owe it to one who has been kind to me to give him a warning. I wish you good night, sir!"

"Stay, stay!" cried Morley; "explain what you mean, at least, before you go."

"No, no, I can't say any more," replied Harry Martin, moving steadily towards the door. "I have said all that I have a right to say; and I only add, that, if you watch you will see, and if you inquire you will find out. You will be convinced, at last, although I should think that you had had enough to convince you already."

Without waiting for further question, he turned and quitted the room, and Morley remained bewildered and surprised, applying the words just spoken to Juliet Carr, although they referred to quite a different object; and asking himself how the man who had just left him could have gained such a knowledge of his affairs. Surprise was certainly the first feeling, but suspicion is a guest that finds but too easy admission into the human heart.

"Peace, and comfort, and happiness are, indeed, gone already,' he said, "and gone by her act—must I call it by her fault? Can this

be trifling?—Love, they say, is blind.—Can it be coquetry? Can she be sporting with my misery?"

But, as he put the question to his own heart, the idea of Juliet Carr, in all her beauty, in all her frank simplicity, in all that open-hearted candour which gave the crowning grace to her demeanour, rose up before his sight, and he became not only angry with himself for having given credit to one word against her, but angry and indignant with the man who had uttered aught that could raise a doubt of her sincerity in his mind.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

VERONICA.

EARLY on the following morning the carriage of Morley Ernstein stood prepared for departure before the little inn at Steig. He had sent to ask after the health of the old woman who had suffered from the accident of the preceding night, and had heard, certainly with pleasure, that the surgeon made a favourable report of her situation, though he at once pronounced that she must remain for many weeks in the room to which she had been carried. For Martin himself the young gentleman had not asked; nor did he speak more than a few words to him when he met him at the bottom of the stairs, in descending to go into his carriage. Although convinced that the man intended well, he was still angry, to say the truth, at the words which the other had addressed to him on the preceding evening; the more angry, perhaps, because he felt irritated with himself on account of the shade of doubt which lingered in his own mind, which he had combated during the whole night without being able to conquer it, which had fled but to return, and which still raised its head against reason and argument—ay, and even conviction itself.

With one of the party which he had encountered the night before, however, he did stop to speak for some minutes. It was with the Italian lady who had been his companion on foot from the place where the accident had occurred to the inn; and he now perceived clearly a fact of which he had only a faint notion from his glance during the preceding evening—namely, that she was a young and very pretty woman; not exactly beautiful, for there was not a feature in her face which deserved that often misapplied epithet, if we except the eyes. They, indeed, were remarkably fine, as most Italian eyes are—bright, sparkling, and full of merry light, but chastened withal by a frequent look of feeling and thoughtful meditation. To behold them, and to watch their expression for any length of time, reminded one of a sunshiny prospect with an occasional cloud floating over it, and varying by its soft shadows the sparkling brightness of the scene.

With her, then, Morley stopped to speak for some time, inquiring after her health, and hoping that she had not suffered from the accidents of the night before. She replied, gaily, that she had nothing to complain of, except that she was stopped on her journey, which, indeed, was not only an annoyance, but a misfortune. It would be two or three days, she said, before the carriage would be able to proceed, and delay would be most inconvenient to her, as she had engagements in Milan and Venice, on account of which she had determined on going by the Brenner as the pass most certain to be open. If she could but reach Constance, she would soon be able to find a conveyance for the rest of the journey, which was not to be done at Steig.

Morley hesitated; English prudence came in the way—the question which every Englishman first puts to himself, "What will people say," instantly suggested itself; and it took him a minute, which under such circumstances is a long time, ere he could make up his mind to do that to which good-nature prompted him. How often is it that good feelings are pandars to bad actions? Alas! too frequently do they lead us so near the door of evil places, that we are tempted to go in. Morley Ernstein took his resolution at length, and replied, that if she were not bound by any means to go on in the same conveyance which had brought her so far, a seat in his carriage was much at her service.

Many persons may, perhaps, inquire whether her sparkling dark eyes had anything to do with Morley's civility. I can conscientiously reply—"Nothing in the world." He would have made the same proposal if she had been as ugly as Cerberus: perhaps more readily; and the only part that her bright eyes could take in the business, was to make her even a more dangerous companion than that three-headed gentleman himself.

She did not refuse the young Baronet's proposal, but laughed with an arch look as she accepted it, saying—"You are afraid of your reputation. Is it not so? All Englishmen are so prudent and careful! We Italians have much more confidence in virtue, bad as they call us; but I am not the least afraid, though my reputation is much more likely to be endangered than yours—for I, too, have a reputation to lose."

She spoke the last words somewhat proudly, and there was a frankness in her whole demeanour which pleased Morley Ernstein, and set him more at ease. The carriage was ordered to wait for half-an-hour, the *voiturier* was easily settled with, the trunks and packages were removed to Morley Ernstein's chariot, and the young Englishman followed the fair Italian into the vehicle, a third place being taken therein by her maid. Good Adam Gray looked grave; and although his brow was somewhat cleared when he saw that his master and the strange lady were not to be without a companion, yet, to say sooth, the old man was not well satisfied.

At the moment they set out, Morley made up his mind not to stay at Schaffhausen, but to go on to Constance at once; and it must be admitted that he took this resolution from an unacknowledged conviction that he was not doing the most prudent thing in the world, in travelling with the fair Italian at all. In fact,

he wished not to make more than one day of the journey. It was later, however, than he had calculated upon when they arrived at Schaffhausen; the hour of the table d'hôte was over; dinner could not be obtained for an hour; and the host inquired, as if it were a thing absolutely necessary to be done, at what time they would like to see the falls. The lady looked in Morley's face, and left him to answer. It seemed to him that there would be a rudeness in not giving her a choice; and the consequence was, they went to see the falls together, by the light of a fine afternoon, and returning to Schaffhausen, remained there that night.

In the saloon to which they were shown there was a piano; and Morley's companion, in one of the unoccupied moments—of which there are more in inns than in any other places, perhaps, in the world—walked up to the instrument, ran her fingers over the keys, with a touch of complete mastery, and hummed, rather than sang, a few bars of a popular opera; but it was done in a manner which left Morley in no doubt that her voice itself had been cultivated with the utmost care. It may easily be supposed, then, that the evening did not pass without music—without that enjoyment, which, whether we may consider it an entity or not, is in all its forms one of the greatest blessings that ever was bestowed on man.

Their second day's journey was verging to a close; a sort of soft languor had come over the fair Italian—a touch of melancholy, such as almost every one must feel in drawing nigh the moment of parting from one with whom we have held sweet intercourse even for a few short hours. They had glances of the Rhine as they rolled along; they caught the distant towers of Constance, to which they were rapidly approaching; gleams of far mountains, and, once, a sight of the wide lake, met their eyes as they advanced; and all told them that the time of separation was coming. The maid was apparently asleep; and, at all events, Morley and his companion were speaking French, which she did not understand. The sights before their eyes, the yellow evening tint that was spreading over the sky, not only led their thoughts to that moment of parting, but brought the conversation suddenly to it also. The lady looked up, from the reverie of a minute or two, with a smile, in which there was a touch of the sadness of which I have spoken.

"Well," she said, "we are now drawing near to our journey's end. I have to thank you much for your kindness. It will prove of great service to me, and, I trust, be of no disservice to you. You see we have passed along our way without meeting any one, so that neither your reputation nor mine can have suffered."

"I know it is very foolish," answered Morley, in his usual frank manner; "but I do not deny that I may feel the prejudices of my country in these respects, though not sufficiently, I hope, to prevent me from doing what is courteous and right. But still, I do think it would be a dangerous practice, generally speaking, for young and pretty ladies, such as yourself, to travel alone with any man unallied to them in blood."

"Why?" demanded the Italian lady, simply.

It was rather a difficult question to answer with sincerity; and, after hesitating for a moment, Morley Ernstein said—"Why, nobody can tell where they go to—how they spend their time. In short, they throw off that sort of responsibility that they owe to society—the eyes of the world are no longer upon them."

"And is it only the eyes of the world which keep people from doing wrong?" asked the lady.

Morley laughed, and, wishing to change the subject, he answered—"Many other inconveniences might happen, you know—they might fall in love with each other, or do a thousand things of that kind."

"Oh, then, I am quite safe!" replied the lady—"for I never yet saw the man whom I felt the least inclination to fall in love with in my life."

"Perhaps you are incapable of love?" said Morley. "There are some women so happily constituted by nature, that they never know what it is to be touched by any but the more tranquil affections."

"Perhaps such is the case," she rejoined, quite seriously—"or perhaps, what is more likely, I may spend all my feelings upon matters of imagination. A song, a piece of music, a scene in a play, will move me in a degree that I cannot describe. I have generally remarked, and am inclined to believe it is an invariable rule, that people of a strong imagination are very seldom troubled with strong affections."

Her observation threw Morley into a reverie. He asked himself whether it were true, and paused in doubt, not having sufficient experience to solve the question at once by his own knowledge, and plunging into those metaphysical deductions which lead as often to what is false as to what is true.

The lady went on to say—"I hope—indeed, I am sure—that such is the case with myself; for I would not for the world feel such passions as I see depicted and hear told. Thus I know myself to be perfectly safe, and can trust myself in any situation without fear."

"And yet," rejoined Morley, with a meaning smile, "you are an Italian."

"True," she answered, with one of her sparkling looks; "but perhaps the very fact of the existence of such strong passions amongst my countrywomen, as you would insinuate, may have been my warning and safeguard."

"Where there is no danger, there is no need of a safeguard," said Morley. "You acknowledge, then, that it is by reason, and not by nature, that you are guided."

"You must not press me too hard," exclaimed the lady, laughing—"you know we women never understand how to argue. All I know is, that I never did love, and never shall love, any man—not even you, fair sir," she added, laughing—"though you have certainly been much more kind and courteous than most of your countrymen; and the only way I can repay you is, by asking you to come and see me, should you visit Venice, or, at least, should you be there some two months hence. I may then be enabled to return your courtesy in some shape, and perhaps may

procure you the means of seeing more of the City of the Waves than foreigners usually do see."

"I will certainly avail myself of your invitation," replied Morley; "but you forget that, owing to the strange way in which our acquaintance commenced, I am ignorant, up to the present moment, even of your name."

"Oh, that omission will soon be remedied," answered the lady—"my name is Veronica Pratesi. You will easily find me in Venice."

Thus ended the conversation to which we wished to refer. The lady and Morley spent the evening together at Constance, and part of the next morning. A carriage was easily procured to convey her on her way, and Morley placed her in it, and bade her adieu with feelings of regret.

Her sparkling manner, too, was somewhat overshadowed by passing clouds. At one moment, she was gay and bright as ever; at the next, fell into deep thought. She bade him farewell, however, with all the levity of a Frenchwoman; but as soon as the adieu was spoken, and while something was doing to the interminable harness, she gazed down into the bottom of the vehicle, as if to prevent herself from having any more last words. The moment the driver's whip cracked for departure she turned round to look at Morley again; and her face was then overclouded.

CHAPTER XLIX.

IN VENICE.

"HA! HA!" said Lieberg, as he sat at breakfast with Morley Ernstein, in the Golden Stag, at Munich—"so you met with the cold and fair Veronica, and actually travelled with her in your own carriage. I trust, Morley, you did not fall in love with her, for there is no hope there. When she first appeared at the opera at Naples——"

"What! she is an actress, then!" demanded Morley Ernstein.

"A singer—a singer," replied Lieberg—"the famous cantatrice. But, as I was saying, when first she appeared at Naples, all the dissolute old nobles of that kingdom, and half-a-dozen others of your own, Morley, thought no expense would be too great to add this fair linnet to their aviary. Various were the proposals made to her, more flattering to her avarice than her virtue; but to every offer of the kind Veronica returned but one answer—that of silent contempt. Then came the young, and the gay, and the fascinating; and many a woman, Morley, as you well know, surrenders to the wordy siege of a penniless young libertine, who has resisted the golden bombardment of his grandfather. But it was all in vain. Veronica gave them to understand that she objected to young fools just as much as to old ones. Some were driven into the despair of matrimony, and made what they called honourable proposals, after having made what, by a plain inference, she was bound to consider the reverse. But Veronica answered, that whatever she thought of their former offers, she thought still worse of these, adding, that whatever folly she did commit, it should not at least be the folly of marriage. Every one then said that she would make her own choice, and would select some one, either for his rank, his person, or his mind. But four years and more have since passed; all ranks, classes, conditions, and degrees, have been at her feet, and Veronica has continued to show herself exactly the same piece of ice which she from the first declared herself to be."

"In fact," said Morley, "a cold coquette."

"No," answered Lieberg, gravely—"no. I was at Naples the time the thing first began, and I must do her the justice to say, she gave no encouragement to any one. People always will seek what is difficult to be had; and that quality, together with her singing, her fine eyes, and her beautiful figure, were the great attractions. She sets up for a sort of Corinne, too, writes poetry, goes about and sees the world, makes an immense deal by her singing, and is a person very much recherché in Venice, I can assure you."

"Is she a Venetian?" demanded Morley.

"No," replied Lieberg—"she is a Milanese, but she lives principally in Venice, because, as she says truly, it is a city without noise, and there is nothing she abhors so much as the rolling of carriage-wheels, except the plaudits of a theatre."

"Then the fact simply is," said Morley, "she is a woman without passions, and whose vanity takes a high tone."

"In the last, you are right," answered Lieberg—"with regard to the first, I doubt. There is something in the flashing of her eye, in the brightness of her smile, and, occasionally, in the impetuous torrent of her song, that gives the lie to her whole conduct. But as I do not know her in private life, and never intend to know her either, I cannot say, with any certainty, what is really beneath the appearance of coldness. I never put myself in a situation to fall in love with a woman with whom I am not likely to succeed; and if you will take my advice, Morley, you will keep out of the way of Veronica Pratesi, especially as you are very fond of music."

"I am not at all afraid," replied Morley; "there is not the least chance of my ever falling in love with a barrel organ, let the tunes be ever so pretty."

Lieberg smiled, well pleased to see that a bitterness not natural to his young companion still held possession of him, so far as to affect even his speech upon ordinary occasions. The conversation dropped here, and at the end of about ten days, once more in full companionship, their carriages were rolling down into the valley of the Inn.

The country in which they now were was quite new to Morley, but not so to Lieberg. He had seen it often before, and the freshness of first impressions was at an end. Nevertheless, he gladly took part with his fellow-traveller in all his wanderings through that bright scenery; he climbed the peaks of the mountains with him; he gazed down into the valleys; he trod the wide tracks of snow; he accompanied him through the deep woods of pines; he stood upon the edge of the beetling precipice, or gazed over

the wild dark lake; and it must be said, that his companionship gave additional charms to the expedition. Untiring in mind and in body, seeming never to know weariness for a moment, always well pleased at whatever course was taken, and always deriving a fresh current of thoughts, equally new and striking, from every change of scene that presented itself, Lieberg kept the thoughts of Morley Ernstein in a continual state of excitement, pleasing, though too strong. Occasionally, indeed, some of those strange observations, or perverted trains of reasoning, to which I have already adverted more than once, would burst forth, as it were, irrepressibly; and dark and awful words, betokening a spirit angry with and rebellious to the will of God, would startle Morley at the very moment when his own heart felt inclined to raise itself in praise and adoration.

It was thus one day, after climbing nearly to the summit of a high peak, that they stood with their feet among the fresh-fallen snow of the preceding night. There was a bright blue sky above them, and a light cloud rolled round the edge of the mountain, about half way down; while beyond it—bursting forth in strong relief of light and shade—appeared one of those splendid valleys, surrounded on every side by Alps, and a thousand lesser hills rising up from the bottom of the depth, and bearing high their ancient castles to catch the noon-day sun. Morley gazed round with feelings of love and gratitude towards that Being who has robed the earth in splendour, and cast a mantle of beauty over all his works. But then, even then, as their eyes rested upon an infinite multitude of things, varying through every form of loveliness, and running up in magnificent harmony, from the fair delicate flower on the edge of the snow, to the stupendous sublimity of the icy crags above their head—it was then, even then, that Lieberg, after several minutes of dark thought, exclaimed, "Where shall man flee from God, from him who has pronounced himself a God of vengeance—from him whose will is death and destruction—who has allotted a portion of sorrow to every being he has created, and cast the miserable insects he has formed into a sea of wretchedness, and strife, and mutual destruction? Where shall man flee from this fierce God? If he go into the cities, the pestilence and the sword, the midnight robber, the slow disease, the poisoned cup, the faithless paramour, disappointed hopes, agonized limbs, pangs, and death, meet him there; he can scarcely breathe the air without drawing in some calamity; he can scarcely lay himself down to rest without finding an asp upon his pillow. If he climb to the top of the mountains, and take refuge in the solitude of these eternal hills, the lightning and the rending fragment, the false footing and the thundering avalanche follow him there, and crush the writhing object of tyrannical power, as man himself sets his foot upon the worm."

Morley turned round, and gazed at him with sensations of wonder and horror; but after a moment's pause, the awful cloud which had hung upon Lieberg's fine brow passed away, and noticing the expression of his companion's countenance with a smile, he added—"You are surprised, Morley, to find such gloomy feelings in one so gay as I am; but, perhaps, it may be the conviction of all life's many miseries that teaches me so eagerly to drain its scanty joys."

"No, Lieberg, no," answered Morley, somewhat sternly; "I was not surprised at finding such gloomy feelings; but I was surprised at finding such impious thoughts, and hearing such blasphemous words."

"But are they not true ones?" demanded Lieberg, with his eye flashing. "For what did God make man, but to curse him?"

"Man is his own curse," replied Morley. "We see it in everything. Are not his luxuries and his vices the cause of his diseases? Are not his strife and contention the effect of his own pampered passions? Are not almost all the evils that beset him, in a civilized state, the work of his own refractory will, opposed to the declared will of God? You may say that God formed him with those passions, and therefore that still the curse was his; but God gave them to him for good, not for evil; and not only with beneficent generosity left him to choose the good or evil course, according to his own volition, but guarded him against the one by warning and exhortation, and persuaded him to the other by every inducement, and every reward. Man is his own curse, Lieberg; man is his own curse, and if, as we daily see, he brings two-thirds, at least, of the misery that exists, upon his own head, by his own act, we may very well conclude, that the rest of the load also was purchased in times past by errors and disobedience of the same kind."

"By eating an apple in a garden," said Lieberg, with a sneer, turning on his heel to descend the mountain.

"By rebellion against God, in some shape!" replied Morley.

Lieberg paused suddenly upon the verge of the crag, with his eye flashing fiercely, as if from personal offence, and for an instant the same demon-like expression came over his whole face, and even form, which had once caught the eye of Helen Barham. As he stood there, with his fine limbs thrown into strong action while balancing himself proudly upon the very edge of the precipice, and with the dark shadow on his haughty features, he certainly looked like one of the fallen spirits come down to hold dangerous communion with mortal men. The passion which moved him, however, passed away in a moment, and, without saying another word, he proceeded in his descent.

Though nothing that could be called a dispute had taken place, yet this conversation cast a shadow both upon Morley and Lieberg, during the rest of the day. They proceeded in the afternoon to Meran, and put up at the little inn, where stories of Hofer, and thoughts of past times, served, like the evening sun, to clear the clouds away, and they rose for their journey the following morning in a more cheerful mood.

The weather in the Tyrol had been fine and warm, for the season of the year. The days had been clear, the nights fine, as if summer had come back in the train of autumn, to usurp, for a time, possession of the earth in despite of

winter. The scenery had thus appeared to the highest advantage, and the Lombard plains seemed flat and meaningless to the eyes of Morley Ernstein, as they bent their way towards Verona.

After sleeping in that fine old city, seeing all the curious monuments which it contains, Juliet's apocryphal tomb, and that splendid amphitheatre which first wakes up in the mind of the traveller the images of the mighty past, that Rome is destined to call forth still more vividly, it became a question whether they should proceed on their way southward, while the weather was yet fine and clear, or turn aside to visit Venice, and other places of interest on that side of Italy.

Lieberg seemed somewhat anxious to go on, but Morley had dreams about Venice which he wished to realize. It was to him a place of greater interest than Rome itself. He had few sympathies with the Cæsars, but with

"The Rialto, Shylock, and the Moor,"

he had a thousand, and easily induced his companion to give up his own opinion, and accompany him, by Vicenza and Padua, to the City of the Sea, proposing, as they returned, to pass by Mantua and Modena, on their way to Naples.

Venice is certainly a place of enchantment—the only town I ever saw which leaves fancy far behind. Morley Ernstein yielded to the magic influence of the place, as he had yielded to the effect of every other beautiful thing along the road. The buildings, the pictures, the air, the Adriatic, the moonlight walks in the Piazzetta, the solemn mysterious gloom of the jewel-fretted dome of St. Mark's,—all excited his imagination to a pitch which he had thought scarcely possible; he lived as if in another world; he felt as if his spirit were refreshed and renewed. The powers of enjoyment came fully back upon him, and the vein of melancholy, of unfading and unfaded regret, that mingled with every pleasure, seemed, now, to elevate and not to lower the tone of his sensations.

Such was his state of mind when, one day, as he was waiting for Lieberg on the Sclavonian quay, and gazing thoughtfully over towards the ghost-like church of the *Salute*, a lady crossed him, dressed, as is very common there, in black, and gliding along with a quick but graceful pace, her head bent down, and her veil closely drawn around her face. She had passed him before she seemed to take any notice; but then she suddenly stopped, and turning round, as if she partially recognized him and wished to make herself sure, she raised her veil, showing him the countenance of his fair companion Veronica.

Morley sprang forward with real pleasure, for the effect of Lieberg's description of her character and conduct was yet strong upon his mind; but she looked at him reproachfully, though she held out her hand, saying—"You had forgotten your promise. I have heard of your being in Venice these five days."

"I had not forgotten, indeed," replied Morley; "but, if you recollect, you gave me to understand that you would not be here so soon."

"True—true," she said; "but I did not stay in Milan as long as I expected—I wanted to get back; and now I am mortified, because I dare say you have seen almost all that is worth seeing here without me. I wanted to show you everything myself, and to see your enthusiasm, to call it forth, to force it into action. My countrymen, and almost every other nation upon earth, make a mistake about you English; they say you have no enthusiasm, but I believe that England is the only country where true enthusiasm is to be found. The difference is, that with us there is the gilding upon the surface—with you the gold is in the heart. With most nations it is a painted shrine, having little inside, but with you it is the oaken casket, and the jewels within; now, you have deprived me of the pleasure of seeing these jewels—I mean, making you display your enthusiasm; and therefore I am very angry with you."

"You shall not be angry with me long," said Morley—"for I have not yet seen one-half there is to see, and my enthusiasm is in such a state of excitement, that I could run wild upon almost any subject connected with Venice."

"That is right," she cried; "and you must let me show you all. Where are you going now? My gondola is at the end of the quay; but who is this coming here, as if to join you? Oh, I remember!—that dark, terrible man, Lieberg; I have seen him in Naples in days of old. I never loved that man: there is something fearful about him. You are travelling with him, I hear. Beware—beware!"

Almost as she spoke, Lieberg came up, bowing low to the fair Italian, but without addressing her, and Morley could evidently see that he was not well pleased to find him in her society.

"I am sorry," he said, addressing his friend—"that I shall not be able to accompany you as I intended, for I find letters at the banker's this morning, which require an immediate answer."

Veronica's features sparkled with pleasure, which she took not the slightest pains to conceal. "You shall come with me, then," she said, "and we will row across to one of the islands, go to the Armenian convent, or to Murano—No, that is too far—we will go down the grand canal, and see some of the pictures. There are pictures here that make one live three hundred years ago, and speak with people that have been long in their graves."

"A pleasant employment, madam, for a dull morning," said Lieberg.

"Sometimes the dead are as pleasant, and less dangerous companions than the living," answered the lady, in a marked manner.

Lieberg bowed low, with bitter emphasis replying—"Undoubtedly!"

Veronica could not but feel his meaning, and her eyes flashed for a moment angrily; but the next instant the look of irritation passed away, and giving her hand gaily to Morley Ernstein, she said—"Come! your friend is not an Englishman, and therefore we can expect no enthusiasms from him."

In a minute or two after, however, as they were walking on together, she said, in a low voice—"Has he been slandering me? Has he dared to say aught against my name?"

"No, indeed," answered Morley Ernstein; "nothing of the kind, I assure you. He told me he had seen you at Naples some years ago——"

"But his words implied something," she exclaimed, hastily—"he spoke as if he wished to give you a warning, and evidently alluded to some existing danger. What was it? Tell me, my friend, if you are frank, as I believe you. Did he, or did he not, mean to imply that I was like some of our light women of the theatres, who seek for men, such as you are, to plunder and deceive them?"

"Not in the least," replied Morley; "he thought, on the contrary, that you might captivate but to make me unhappy; in fact, that you might sport with love after having excited it."

"I seek not to excite it," said the lady, in a grave tone; "I never have sought, and I have warned you fully."

"You have," answered Morley, "and I have no fear. My heart is cased in iron, fair lady, as hard as your own, and there is no danger of my deriving aught but pleasure from your society."

The lady looked up in his face with a gay smile, conscious of grace and powers of captivation, perhaps doubting a little her companion's capabilities of resistance, and half inclined to try them, if but to shake his too great confidence. In short, dear reader—for in truth I must be short—Morley Ernstein and Veronica Pratesi were in as dangerous a situation as ever two people were in this wide world; both of them a good deal too confident of their own powers, and trusting themselves too far in every way.

At the end of the quay was the lady's own gondola, and in it, half sitting, half lying, as is the case in those luxurious contrivances, Morley Ernstein skimmed along over the waves of the lagune during the rest of the day. That in itself was dangerous enough, but the conversation of his fair companion, the sights they met with, the feelings, the thoughts, the enthusiasms which those sights called forth, the excitement of the scene and the circumstances, all rendered even that first day very perilous indeed. Darkness at length fell, and Veronica insisted that Morley should dine with her, and spend the rest of the day at her house. It was a small but beautiful dwelling, with a delicately carved marble staircase, leading down to one of the principal canals; and as Morley found that he could not leave Lieberg without some explanation, he obtained her permission to return to the inn on the promise of being back with her again immediately. Her gondola conveyed him to Danielli's, and waited for him while he went up and told Lieberg of his engagement.

His companion gazed in his face with a look of some astonishment, and then exclaimed, laughing—"On my life, Morley, either this woman is a coquette, which is a name she never bore, or else she is in love with you."

"Neither, my good friend," replied Morley. "If I did not feel sure that she was neither one nor the other, my conduct would be very different."

"Well, go on, Morley—go on," said Lieberg, shaking him by the hand; "if you win Veronica Pratesi, you will indeed be an extraordinary person. But you will not win her; so take care you don't get yourself into a scrape."

To some it may seem that Lieberg was very kind in his apprehensions for his young friend, but with others it will be doubted whether his warnings were likely to deter him from or lead him on upon the path which he was pursuing. We will not take the pains of solving the problem, but will only tell what was the real effect which his words did produce. They instantly suggested to Morley's mind the question—"Is it possible to win Veronica?—to call that fascinating creature my own—to accomplish that in which so many had failed?" There were three distinct sources of temptation in those three ways of putting the question. Passion, fancy, vanity—all raised their sweet voices together; and although Morley, like Ulysses, tried to stop his ears against the song of the Sirens—or, in other words, turned away his mind from the idea—yet, throughout the whole of his after-communication with Veronica, that question came like a vague sound, heard, though he would not listen to it—"Is it possible to win her?"

The devil never miscalculates in his dealings with human nature, and in choosing his word, he always selects the right one for his own purposes.

He found Veronica alone, standing in one of those beautiful halls which have seen the fair and the bright of other days, and seem in their very atmosphere to bear the memories of more poetical times, even in the steam and railroad age in which we live. She was arranging flowers in a large antique vase, and the classic lines of her beautiful figure accorded well with every object that the room contained, while an air of intense thought, all too deep for the light employment in which she was engaged, harmonized the whole—like the low tones of some fine instrument in the bass, pervading with its solemn sounds a fine and complicated piece of music.

Veronica looked up from the flowers as Morley entered, but seemed scarcely to see him for a moment or two, so intense was the fit of musing into which she was plunged. Then, with a graceful wave of the head, and a smile at her own abstractedness, she gave him her hand, saying—"You have been long; and, as I always do when left alone, I had fallen into a reverie."

"A sweet or a bitter one?" demanded Morley.

"Mixed," she replied, "as all things on earth are. But come, dinner will be ready in a few minutes, and in the mean while I will sing you a song, which has never been heard by any ears but yours. It is by a young composer, named Bellini, who will one day be a great man."

The reader may imagine how the evening passed—music, and poetry, and deep thought, and bright fancies,—Wit, and Imagination, and Feeling, sporting like three sweet children on the carpet, while the good old nurses, Judgment and Prudence, were kept at the back of the door. Twice a fit of musing fell upon Veronica. Was the cause of it fear? Did she doubt herself? Did she doubt her companion? Who shall say? One thing is certain—she and Morley Ernstein

were equally resolved not to fear anything, which is, in general, a strong sign of being afraid. It was late when they parted, and both started when they found how late, for the minutes had gone so rapidly that each thought the night was not far spent. They only left each other to meet again the following morning early, Veronica exacting a promise that Morley would see nothing more in Venice without her.

"I cannot refuse your friend's company," she said, "if is needs must be so; but I shall never like him, even if he were to call me an angel."

Lieberg, however, refused to be of the party, saying, with a sneer—"The housemaids in England, Morley, have a proverb which sets forth the inconveniences attending upon the number three; at least, in reference to social things. Now, what is good for a housemaid is good for a king or a count, and therefore I will not render your party of the obnoxious number. So fare you well, and success attend you, though I am quite willing to take you a bet of five thousand pounds this moment that you do not succeed."

"I shall succeed in all I seek for," replied Morley, "for I shall seek for nothing that is not very easily obtained."

Once more the gondola skimmed along the canals, and once more Morley and Veronica, side by side, were borne over the bright Adriatic waters, throughout a world of beautiful things, and indulging their fancies to the utmost. Veronica told Morley again all that she had told him before about the coldness of her nature, and the impossibility of her ever loving any one; and Morley laughed, and assured her that the warning was unnecessary; and then they both smiled and continued the subject of love, till, landing at a palace on the Grand Canal, they walked thoughtfully into the vacant rooms hung with pictures beautiful and inestimable in themselves, but falling into sad decay. The first thing that their eyes rested upon was a small but exquisite painting of the marriage of St. Catherine, by Paul Veronese, and before it they paused for several minutes without uttering a word.

"It is strange," said Veronica, at length, "that such things should exist."

"As love, do you mean?" demanded Morley, with some surprise.

"No, no, no," replied his fair companion, with playful vehemence; "I can easily conceive love, though I never felt it, and can conceive its leading one to anything, to excess of every kind, jealousy, revenge, sacrifices of all kinds—everything, in short, but marriage. Why any man, because he is attached to a woman, should wish her to make herself a slave, I cannot understand; but still less, how any woman can consent to such a folly. She would love him ten times better if she were not bound by a hard oath; and he would not so soon cease to love her, as men usually do, if he did not first make her a slave."

Morley did not reply, but went on musing, and Veronica once more brought back the conversation to the subject of love, uttered a few gay and saucy sentences in defiance of the great power, and then fell into a more pensive train, ending in a fresh reverie.

Thus passed the day; and when they once more reached the steps of her own house, she said—"I will not ask you to stay with me to-day, for I must go to the theatre. You may come and see me there if you like. You will not often have the opportunity, for I have to-day taken a resolution to give up the stage for ever. I require it no longer as a resource, and my feelings are changed towards that profession in which I once found triumph and delight. I used to imagine that there is something glorious in embodying a great writer's conceptions, or in giving voice to the melodious visions of some great composer; but now, I know not why, I feel sick of it altogether, so I shall only sing the five nights for which I am engaged, and once more for the poor of the city. Come and hear me then! But do not applaud. I would not for one half of Europe see you clap your hands with the vulgar crowd; I should not be able to sing a note afterwards."

Had Morley Ernstein been experienced in love, he would have known the invariable maxim that the moment a woman separates one particular man from the rest of the world in her feelings towards him—whatever seeming those feelings may put on—the gates of the heart are thrown open for love to ride in triumphant.

Morley was not experienced, however; he went to the theatre, and he saw Veronica in one of those tragic operas where song gives intenser voice to passion. He obeyed her instructions to the letter, for the deep and breathless interest that he took in the scene, the thrilling delight that the full, rich, exquisite tones of her voice produced, left no room for that critical approbation from which springs applause. He was near enough for her to see him as well as he saw her, and for a moment, when their eyes first met, her voice sank and wavered; but then it burst forth again with power only increased, and the rapturous plaudits of all who were there present, showed that she had that night excelled all which she had ever done before.

Morley waited for her coming out, and offered her his hand to lead her to her boat. She seemed pale and fatigued; he uttered not a word of praise or admiration, but led her on almost in silence.

"You must not come to-night," she said; "I am tired and exhausted, so I will go to bed and sleep. Come early to-morrow; we will see sights all day, and in the evening I will have some people to meet you at dinner whom you will like to see. Canova is here, and——"

"Pray do not have any one," said Morley, "unless you yourself wish it. I would rather spend the evening as we spent the last."

She looked in his face by the moonlight for a moment as they stood by the edge of the canal, and then answered, in a voice tremulous and almost mournful, "It shall be as you like."

What will you have, reader? Two, three, four, five days passed away, and passed in the same manner. Veronica became pale and

thoughtful, Morley Ernstein agitated and apprehensive.

Lieberg no longer sneered, but sometimes looked in Morley's face, and once laid his hand on his arm, saying—"In my course through life, Morley, I have seen more men render themselves miserable by throwing away happiness that was offered to them, because their vanity was engaged in the pursuit of that which they never could obtain, than by any other means. Morley, you know your own business best; but, I beseech you, let no such vanity affect you, for happiness is never offered to a man twice in life."

Morley made no reply, but gazed steadfastly forth upon the blue waters before him.

CHAPTER L.

JULIET'S INFLUENCE.

Oh, how often in life, when struggling with temptation, in the darkness of error and of wrong!—oh, how often would we give the best jewel we possess, for one ray of light to guide us back to the bright path that we have forsaken. That light, indeed, is always to be found, till life itself is at an end, though with more difficulty at every step that we take onward in the darkness; for the hand of a beneficent God has planted beacons all across the stormy sea of life, to guide us into port, if we would look for them. But besides these—these steadfast lights, which mark out the right track, and should keep us ever from deviating—there are a thousand circumstances arising, apparently, by the merest accident, which cross our course, like wandering boats, to hail us as they sail, and tell us we have gone astray. It is for some of these that we long when we first find ourselves chartless, amidst the waves of error. We look not for the beacons that guide us back, but too often gaze afar for some distant sail to follow her in hope of help and guidance.

Morley Ernstein leaned his head upon his hand on the morning after his conversation with Lieberg, and, with his brain all in confusion, his heart full of contention, he would have given all he possessed for any little accident which would have forced him away from Venice. He was ashamed of his own irresolution—he felt that he was hurrying on to the destruction of a life of hopes—he felt that he could never love but one—that his love for her—his pure, high, holy love—even in agony and disappointment, was better, far better, than the fiery cup of mere passion; and that though he might know delirious joys and feverish happiness with another, yet the sorrowful memory of Juliet Carr was worth a world of such enjoyments. But he was fascinated, the magic spell was over him—like the glamour, which the Scotch, of old, attributed to the gipsies,—compelling him to follow wheresoever the charmer would. Poor Morley, however, had not to contend against his own passions only, there were obstacles thrown in his way by others; and though on that very morning he took the same resolution which he had followed in Paris, to quit the place at once, yet he was prevented from acting upon it.

"Lieberg," he said, going down to the saloon, where breakfast waited him, "you will think me eccentric and capricious; but I much wish to leave Venice to-day."

"Nay," said Lieberg, in reply, "that is scarcely possible, for me, at least; and I think, Morley, you will not, a second time, deal so brusquely with me as you did in the French capital. Wait for me, only till the day after to-morrow; and then, however wrong I may think you, I will accompany you at once."

"Why do you think me wrong?" demanded Morley, sharply.

"If I must speak the plain truth, Morley," answered Lieberg, "I think you wrong, because I know all that has happened to you. I am aware that you have been trifled with, deceived, made a sport of, by one who was not worthy of you, and whose conduct you will one day see in its proper light; and I am sure, also, that you have now within your grasp a treasure which would make you the envy of one half of Europe, and that you will not take it, out of weak regard for a woman who has sported with you in the most cruel manner. I say you are wrong, Morley, in point of justice to yourself, and equally so to Veronica, for she is not one to exact from you any ties but those of love; and it would be less painful far to part at an after-period, if you find that you cannot be happy together, than to leave her now, when you have taught her to fancy you everything that she has dreamt of as forming the being for whom she could regard the whole of the rest of the world with coldness. But you would be happy! She is too enthusiastic and devoted ever to lose that dream; and you would find in her that love which alone can give you full felicity, and that endless variety which would keep up the charm to the last hour of life. However, to-day you cannot go, for you forget you left your carriage at Mestre, with a broken spring, and it cannot be repaired before to-morrow."

Strange, that a broken spring should have an effect which no argument could have! Morley had hardened himself against Lieberg's persuasions; but the broken spring gave him an excuse for staying, which was valid to himself; and though it could hold good but for one day, that was all Lieberg wanted. It was enough to let his words have their effect in silence.

"That is unfortunate!" replied Morley; and, retiring to his own chamber, he sent the courier to have the carriage repaired at once; but in the mean while he thought of all that Lieberg had said, and dressed himself hastily, to go to the house of Veronica.

In a few minutes the gondola glided up to the steps of Veronica's house, the door opened to admit him, the servant did not even go on to announce him. All spoke as plainly as signs can speak, that he was regarded in that dwelling as no other person was regarded; that he was one and alone in the favour of its mistress, and that her feelings spread themselves around to her dependents.

He went on up the stairs, then, with a quick

step, and a beating heart; but as he did so, in passing the window of an ante-room, that overhung one of the canals, there was the gliding rush of a gondola through the water below, and voices speaking as the boat was pushed along. It was Italian they were talking; but one sweet voice was very like that of Juliet Carr, and Morley paused and trembled. Reader, though he was fascinated and attracted, though admiration and regard—ay, and passion, had each its share, Morley Ernstein did not love Veronica—he could think of another at a moment like that, and he did not love Veronica!

He heard her move in the next chamber, however, and went on. She was paler than usual, but her paleness was not a defect, but rather the contrary. She looked beautiful, though she was not beautiful, and her dark resplendent eyes were full of soul and life; while over the whole of the rest of her face, and of her exquisite figure, there was an air of languor that contrasted strangely, but finely, with the light and fire of those dark orbs.

"You have been long this morning," she said, in a voice, every tone of which was music. "Why have you come so late?—You are agitated, too!" and she gazed in his face for a moment, while similar and still greater agitation took possession of her whole frame. Her eyes gradually sank to the ground, her cheek became crimson, her hand trembled in his, her whole form shook in every limb. Morley felt that she was sinking, and catching her in his arms, he supported her to the sofa, at the other side of the room.

"Veronica!" he said—"Veronica! what is this?"

"Ask me not—ask me not?" she replied, putting away his hand and covering her own eyes. "Ask me nothing, Morley. Tear not away the veil from my own sight. Make me not own that I have deceived you—that I have deceived myself. Oh! leave me, leave me, and forget me!"

Morley tried to soothe her, but it was in vain; Veronica burst into a passion of tears, and though she left her hand in his when he took it, she answered him not.

Thus it continued for some time; Morley remained more than an hour with her, and it were useless to attempt to describe all that took place, impossible to detail all that was said. Neither of them knew what they had uttered when they parted, but the method of their parting was somewhat strange. Veronica had become calmer, she had even given to Morley Ernstein the first caress of affection that her lips had ever bestowed upon mortal man. But whether it was that remorse and regret even then, like a serpent only half hidden by the roses, suffered itself, in some vague and shadowy manner, to appear in word, or look, or action, I cannot tell; Veronica suddenly started away, and clasped her hands together, exclaiming—"I thought you long, but you are come too soon; I thought you were here seldom, but you have been here too often! Oh, Morley, Morley! leave me now, I beseech you. Leave me to thought, leave me to reflection! I will write to you—I will send to you. Fear not," she continued, seeing a look of pain come over his countenance; "I will never make you unhappy; but I would only have time for thought—I would only act calmly—it shall be at your own choice. Everything shall be at your will; but if you come to me again, you come for ever—Leave, leave me, now;—if I say more, I shall die."

Morley left her, and strange and great was the agitation in his heart, as he cast himself again into the gondola, and the boat rowed away.

It was gliding rapidly up the great canal, when suddenly it passed one of those large boats used by the Venetian government to carry strangers to and from Venice, in communication with the post-houses of Mestre and Fusina. It was filled with people, and rowed by several men. There were English liveries and English faces in it, and in the principal part appeared a group, which, at any other time, would have attracted Morley's attention instantly. As it was, it was only when the boat was shooting fast past his own, that the countenance of Juliet Carr burst upon his sight, and was gone again in a moment.

"Stop, stop!" he cried to his own boatman. "Where is that boat going? Follow it quick!"

"It is going to Mestre, sir," replied the man. "We can never catch it. They are going to join the post-horses, and will be gone before we arrive."

"Ten sequins, if you come up in time!" said Morley; and away the boat flew over the waters, like a bird.

The moment seemed dreadfully long; but what is there that gold will not do? Mestre was at length in sight, Morley's foot was upon the shore, and, darting at once to the inn—which so many readers will recollect as a mere hotel for empty carriages—he gazed round for the party, which must have arrived only a few minutes before him. There were two chariots standing before the door, with horses attached to them, ready for departure, and servants lingering round, as if all were concluded in the way of packing, and nothing remained but for their masters to appear, ere the vehicles rolled away. Before Morley could enter the inn, there were voices on the stairs, and the face of Juliet Carr herself appeared, with several others, in the door-way. It was as beautiful as ever, but somewhat pale, and there was a listless sadness in the expression, which spoke to Morley's heart, and told him that the spirit within could find no satisfaction in sporting with the feelings of him who loved her. Morley strove to be calm, to collect his thoughts, to tranquillize his demeanour; but every one must know how vain are such efforts at such a moment.

He advanced straight towards her, however, and took her hand, while the first expression that passed over her countenance was that of pleasure, succeeded suddenly by that painful shadow which their mutual situation naturally produced.

"I *must* speak with you, for a few minutes, Juliet," he said, heeding nobody, seeing nobody but her. "You must not refuse me; for there is much at stake."

"I will not," replied Juliet, in a low but agitated tone; "I will never refuse you that which you have every right to ask, and I know you will never ask anything but what is right. Wait one moment. Let me speak a word to Lord Clavering, and I will be back."

She took a step or two forward, to the group of persons, who had apparently gone on in order not to interrupt a conversation which all must have seen was one of no slight interest; and for about a minute Morley remained, gazing down upon the ground, with thoughts and feelings agitated almost to madness. He now learned, with agony, how different is love and passion, as his heart was torn between the ties that chained him to Veronica, and the higher attachment that bound him to Juliet Carr. He might have stood there for an hour, swallowed up in his own sensations, had not Juliet returned, saying, in a low and tender voice—"Now, Morley—now!"

She led the way, and he followed, to the saloon upon the first floor, where her party had been waiting till the carriages were ready, and there she paused, supporting herself with her hand upon one of the tables, and gazing with her tender, speaking eyes, upon Morley's face, with a look almost approaching to apprehension.

"Juliet!" he said, after a moment's hesitation—"Juliet! you owe me some explanation. Let me know whether you are sporting with a heart that love you, for your own gratification, or at the dictates of others?"

"Oh, Morley!" she exclaimed, her eyes filling with tears, "do I hear such words from you? Are you not sure—do you not see, that I am as wretched as you can be?"

"Then why, Juliet—why?" he demanded; "what is the obstacle? What is the motive that should make you not only cast away your happiness, but mine—mine, which was trusted entirely to your keeping, with the most boundless confidence? If you can assign no motive, I claim you as my own, by every tie, by every right——"

"Nay, nay," she said—"not so, Morley! I conceal not that I love you deeply, truly; but it must be told—I am bound, Morley, by an oath, I am bound, by a promise which I cannot, which I dare not break, and must fulfil to the letter, though it condemns me to sorrow and despair through life!"

"Juliet," replied her lover, in a tone now calm, but calm with despair—"I one time fancied that you would be my guardian angel; that you would form my blessing; that you would be the light of my home, the guide of my footsteps; would cure me of all that was weak or wrong in my nature; would prove at once my safeguard and my happiness. How have I deceived myself! You have taken from me peace; you have deprived me of hope; you leave me without object or expectation in life; you withdraw from me all motive for virtue; you plunge me into degradation and vice!"

Juliet had turned very pale, and trembled as Morley spoke; but as he went on to tell her too truly the state of mind to which he was reduced, and the peril in which he stood, agitation overcame all habits; she sank upon her knees before him, and clasped his hand eagerly.

"Oh, no!" she cried; "No, no!—I am very, very miserable! Morley, save me from that despair—save me from the dreadful thought that I have debased as fine a spirit as ever God sent for trial on this earth. Morley—dear Morley, believe that I am not in fault; and oh, in pity, if ever you loved Juliet Carr, yield not to evil, but conquer it, as we are told to do, with good! —Have compassion upon me, Morley, and do not, in addition to all the wretchedness that has fallen upon my head—in addition to the bitter, the everlasting disappointment of my first and only affection—do not give me the undying agony of thinking that he whom I have ever loved has cast away his fair name, and blasted his heart and spirit with evil, on account of this our sorrow. Promise me, Morley—promise me, at least, to try—promise to resist to the utmost. Nay, nay, I will kneel here till you do promise; I will kneel—I will die, Morley, at your feet, sooner than that you should leave me with such thoughts and purposes as you but now entertained. Will you—will you promise me? When this poor heart is broken, you will then believe and understand all that I feel—nay, strive not to raise me, unless you give me that promise."

"Well, Juliet—well, I do," said Morley Ernstein; "but you know not how I am beset."

"Oh, if you would but forget me," replied Juliet, "happiness might yet be yours;—every happiness that you have dreamt of with me might be yours with another. I know it, Morley—I am sure of it; and Juliet Carr would bless the woman who, as the wife of Morley Ernstein, would fulfil that vision of peace, and goodness, and delight, in which she herself must not share. Oh, that I might say all I know and all I think! —but I must not. Yet the time will, I trust, come ere long, when your own eyes will be opened to qualities far superior to any that I possess, and that you will at length find peace and affection with one upon whom there is no restraint, who can and will, perhaps *does* love you, even now."

Morley shook his head sadly, but without reply. After a moment's pause, there was a voice calling from below for Juliet.

"Do not go!" he exclaimed, catching her hand—"do not go!"

But she withdrew herself gently from him, saying—"I have your promise! Oh, forget not that you have given your promise!" and with those words she left him.

In about an hour, Morley Ernstein came down slowly to the court-yard of the inn; but during the interval he had hardly heard one of all the many sounds in that abode of noise, or seen any object but the forms of his own imagination, though several persons had come in and out of the room while he was there. His face, when he descended was pale and stern, but there was no longer that absent air about him with which he had remained standing so long in the midst of the saloon above. He looked round the court as he came down the stairs, and amongst the first persons on whom his eye rested, was his own courier, and his old servant, Adam Gray; the

one examining his carriage with a blacksmith, the other gazing up towards the windows of the inn, with a face anxious and sorrowful. After speaking a few words, and giving some directions to both, Morley re-entered his boat, and was rowed slowly back to Venice. A slight wind curled the waters of the lagune, and the undulating motion of the boat seemed to soothe him, and to tranquillize thoughts that were in themselves but too turbulent.

But his brief conversation with Juliet Carr had produced the effect it always had upon his mind. There was a magic in the soft melody of her voice, in the pure, spirit-like light of her eyes, in the grace that pervaded her every gesture, which his heart could never resist; and there was still greater power over him, in that tone of high truth and deep sincerity which was felt in all her words and looks. He might think others beautiful when she was not near; but their beauty faded away like stars before the sun, as soon as he saw her. He might doubt others; but when he heard her speak, he could as soon have doubted truth itself as Juliet Carr.

As soon as the first terrible agitation was over, although he felt more strongly than ever that the flower of happiness was utterly blighted, that, root and branch, it was withered away, yet her presence and her words had awakened the higher and the holier spirit in his heart once more, even in the midst of sorrow and despair. The passions of earth lost their light and their importance in his eyes; mere material things, and the joys that they bring with them, became at once to his sight the ephemera that they really are, and principles and feelings assumed their place, as the only imperishable possessions of man. It was as if, for a brief space, he had passed the grave, and had been enabled to see and judge all that this world contains, as, perhaps, we may see and judge it hereafter.

Dark and sad had indeed become his sensations, but the purpose of right was strong within him, and he now turned his mind to consider what he ought to do, how he ought to act. He had a duty to Veronica to perform as well as to himself, and steadfastly he resolved to execute it. It is true that she had aided to deceive him, as to what her own feelings might be, and that he also had deceived himself; but he could not wholly exculpate himself of all that had ensued. He had gone on after he felt the danger to himself and her; he had proceeded when he knew that it was wrong to proceed, and he prepared to bear the consequences, whatever those consequences might be, provided they implied no guilt or dishonour. It took him long to think of all these matters, reader; but as the boat slowly wended its way back to Danielli's, he had time for thought; and when he entered the door of the inn, his mind was fully made up as to his future conduct. He would be true and honest; he would deal with Veronica without a concealment, without reserve; he would tell her all, and leave her to decide his fate and her own. Already, he thought, that fate might be sealed; she had promised to write to him, and the letter might be now waiting which would determine all. On inquiry, he found that such was not the case, and he at once sat down to take that step on which his future destiny hung.

CHAPTER LI.

AN OFFER REFUSED.

MORLEY ERNSTEIN TO VERONICA PRATESI.

"You promised to write to me, and you have not done it. Had you written, ere this time, your fate and mine would have been decided for life. But you have hesitated, and it is evident that there is a struggle in your mind as well as in my own. I therefore take the task upon myself of opening to you my heart's inmost feelings, and showing you what must be the future, as far as my eyes can discover it. We have both, I fear, Veronica, deceived ourselves, and unconsciously may have deceived each other. You were confident in the impunity which you have hitherto enjoyed, and thought that love could never assail you. I felt equally secure in the memory of a deep and permanent, though disappointed passion, and believed that I could never be sufficiently attracted towards any woman, to seek or to win her affection. You thought I was sufficiently warned by the words you have more than once spoken, and I believed you to be steeled against love, or incapable of feeling. Let us first forgive each other for having mutually deceived one another, and then let me offer you all that I have to offer, and ask if it can make you happy. I have heard you speak rash words in regard to marriage, but I will believe that they were spoken more in sport than earnest, and put them aside altogether, for you must be mine by ties we can both respect, or not at all. I offer you, then, my hand and my name; I offer you the tenderest affection; and I promise you that, as my wife, you shall never have to call yourself "a slave." But at the same time, dear Veronica, I cannot but tell you that the first freshness of my heart has been given to another—that I have loved as man only loves once. I leave it to you to decide whether you can be satisfied with less. Every devotion, every tenderness, every affection, shall be yours, that it is possible for my heart to feel; but still I have loved deeply, passionately, entirely, and though the dream is gone for ever, its memory will always endure. It is for your voice to pronounce upon our fate. If you do not like to write at length, tell me to come to you, and I will conceive your answer given. At all events, trust to me as a man of honour, that if you become my wife, my whole days thenceforward shall be devoted to forget all others, and make you happy.

"Morley Ernstein."

He sealed the letter and sent it; and then, burying his face in his hands, remained for some time in deep and anxious thought. Hour after hour passed, and there was no answer, till, as night drew nigh, he became apprehensive, and

went to the well-known dwelling where he had spent so many hours of excitement and temptation. The door no longer opened as if to a master; and the servant, in answer to his questions, said that his mistress was unwell. Morley sent in his name, but Veronica's answer was, that she would write to him. It was not till the following morning that the letter arrived.

FROM VERONICA PRATESI TO MORLEY ERNSTEIN.

"No man ever understands a woman's heart. It never has been, and never will be. The language written in that book is unknown to you all, and you attempt to read it in vain. I did not write to you, my friend—not because there was any struggle in my bosom, for the struggle was over—but I was impeded by feelings you cannot comprehend, for man can never understand what it is to woman to own that she loves for the first time. Such was the task before me if I had written before your letter reached me, and it seemed then a terrible one, when I fancied that a life of joy and happiness was to follow. Such is the task before me still, even now that I know all your feelings, and see the wide extent of misery into which I have plunged. And yet, strange to say, it is less difficult to confess that I do love, when, coupled with that acknowledgment, I have to bid you quit me for ever.

"When your letter first reached me, Morley, disappointment and agony of mind made me unjust. I was angry with you who have in no way offended, rather than with myself, on whom the whole blame must justly rest. I called your words cold, unfeeling, base. But I soon recollected what might have been the result if you had really been base and unfeeling—if, instead of offering me your hand while you nobly confessed the state of your heart, you had taken advantage of my passions and my prejudices, made me the paramour of a few months or years, and then cast me away like a worn garment. My mind soon did you justice, and owned that you were generous, true, sincere—all that it is proud to love, and agony to part with. But, Morley, then came the greatest temptation of all. Weak, weak woman that I am! A voice within me whispered—Accept his offer, use every means of pleasing, put forth every effort, twine yourself round his heart with every binding tie, make yourself necessary to the joy of every hour—become a wife—Oh, Heaven! perhaps become a mother!—and honour, and virtue, and gratitude, will all combine to win for you that love which is now necessary to your existence! Oh, Morley, what a terrible temptation was there! How vanity flattered, and passion persuaded, and selfishness deceived; but I conquered at length. I love you—and yet will never see you more. Never, unless—Yes, there is yet one hope left me!—I cannot, I will not share one thought of your heart, one remembrance, with any woman on the face of the earth; but with the dead I am not so miserly. If the grave have closed over this affection—if your memoried love be with some saint in heaven, come to me—come to me, dear Morley! I will soothe, I will comfort, I will console you! We will weep together over the tomb of her who is gone; and when I strive to cheer each hour of your existence, I will think of her and redouble every effort. But if the air of this earth be still breathed by her who has taken your love from me, adieu, for ever!

"VERONICA."

MORLEY ERNSTEIN TO VERONICA PRATESI.

"Alas, Veronica, that I should add pain to pain! Had my heart been with the dead I would have told you so at once. But still I must not deceive you; it is not so. She whom I have so deeply loved still lives, and her own will is the only barrier between us. Such is the plain truth.

"MORLEY ERNSTEIN."

Morley was not kept long in the faint suspense that still remained after he had written the last sentences. Ere half-an-hour was over, a note was brought him containing those few sad words, "Adieu, for ever!"

In two hours more, he and Lieberg were once more rolling on upon their way towards Bologna, Morley bearing with him some regret and much grief; but so far happy that he could lay his hand upon his heart, and say—"Though I may have erred in the commencement of this sad affair, in the end I have done right."

CHAPTER LII.

A SUDDEN BLOW.

IF Angerona, the secret divinity said to have presided over the fate of ancient Rome, could hear the many barbarous and unromantic names of inns, the Isles Britanniques, the Hotel de l'Europe, the Ville de Paris, &c., which are daily vociferated in the ancient capital of empires, doubtless her ears would be more offended than, we are told, they were formerly, on any one pronouncing her own harmonious title. It was to the principal hospitium, however, in the Piazza di Spagna, that the carriages of Count Lieberg and Sir Morley Ernstein took their way in the middle of one of those winter months when Rome is fullest. The streets were crowded with vehicles of all kinds, as the travelling companions passed along; and so many fair English faces were to be seen in every direction, that it was difficult for them not to believe themselves in that part of Bond Street where, at about four o'clock of the day, during five months of the year, there seems to be an inextricable impediment to the advance or retreat of any sort of carriage whatsoever.

The first order to their respective couriers, given both by Morley Ernstein and Lieberg after they had taken seizin of their apartments, was to proceed to the post-office and inquire for their letters. Lieberg, indeed, seemed the most anxious, and it is to be remarked, that he had

kept up with England a much more constant and regular correspondence than his friend.

During the couriers' absence, however, the two comrades occupied themselves in different ways, according to their several characters and habits. Lieberg, with that regular attention to his own comfort which never deserted him, proceeded to arrange the rooms, of which he took possession, with scrupulous care of their neatness, grace, and convenience. His books were assigned to their particular station; trinkets and ornaments took their place upon one table; implements for writing and drawing were laid upon another; a few small miniature pictures of faces pleasant to the eye were displayed where they could be seen in the best light, and, in short, in half-an-hour the room looked as different as possible from that which it was when he entered it, and represented as nearly as can be conceived the interior of his lodging in Sackville Street.

Morley Ernstein, on the contrary, walked up and down the saloon, which was common to both their apartments, with eyes fixed upon the ground, and a sad and pensive brow. He was arranging the chamber of his own breast while Lieberg was busy with the contents of his carriage, and the agitation of all his feelings was too great to admit of his attending to other things.

It may be asked, then, if Lieberg—whose passions I have represented as intense and strong, and whose keen and active mind was always in movement—if he had no thoughts to occupy him as well as his companion. Yes, reader, he had; and busy were those thoughts all the time, but their activity interrupted nothing else, for there were no contending emotions in his breast—there was no struggle there between good and evil—no regret for aught that had passed—no hesitation in regard to what was to come. It is only when feeling rises up to war with feeling, when principles combat passions, and when, from the great battle-field of the present, our fugitive thoughts fly from both hosts of good and evil into the wide surrounding country of the past and the future, and struggle as they run—it is only then, I say, that, taken up entirely with the strife within, man can attend but little to the idle things without.

What were Morley's sensations the reader may well divine. It is true, no new event of any importance had occurred to grieve or agitate him; but every one must have felt, when any abiding sorrow is at the heart, how a fresh scene will sometimes rouse it, as if from sleep, and with it all its host of painful memories.

In about half-an-hour the courier returned with the letters. There were several to each of the gentlemen; but the two or three first that each of them opened, seemed to excite very little interest, for they were read carelessly, in one instance, eliciting a passing smile, in another, a momentary look of thought, and then cast aside. At length, however, Lieberg came to one which brought a dark look of triumph upon his handsome features; and after reading it twice, he folded it carefully up and put it by, turning his bright dark eyes slowly to the countenance of Morley, who now stood in one of the windows, perusing with anxious attention a long letter of several sheets. The young Englishman's brow was contracted, his lip was curled, his eye straining on the paper. When he had read one sheet he re-read it, and then glanced more rapidly over the second and third, which seemed to be written in another hand.

But we must turn to the first sheet, and give the reader some account of its contents. It was addressed to Morley by his guardian, Mr. Hamilton, and conveyed some of the most unpleasant tidings that could meet his eye, as far as his pecuniary affairs were concerned.

"My dear Morley (the letter said), I am distressed not to know exactly where to find you, as I have to write to you on business of a very urgent nature. I shall, however, address this letter to Rome, trusting that you may receive it ere long. A fortnight ago I received what I then considered a very extraordinary application from a solicitor, informing me that a bill in chancery was about to be filed against you immediately, for the recovery of the estate of Warmstone Castle, your title to which he maintained to be bad. At first I felt inclined to treat the affair with contempt, but upon this legal gentleman calling upon me again, I saw him, and found that several eminent lawyers had been engaged in the affair, and consequently that it was more serious than I at first imagined. At the same time there was a degree of fairness about the tone of the opposite party, which induced me to meet them in the same manner, and I have had two interviews with all the parties, in which I find they ground their claim upon the following assertions. You are aware, I dare say, that your father became possessed of Warmstone by purchase from a Mr. Barham. The sum given was ninety-three thousand pounds, and the title at the time seemed perfectly good. A will, however, and deed of settlement is now produced, showing that this Mr. Barham did not succeed to the estate as his father's direct heir, but under this will and settlement, by which the estate was strictly tied up. The father left but one son, indeed, the person who sold the estate to your father, but that son at the time the will was signed was married and had a child, and the will strictly limits the estate to that child and his children, appointing in a diffuse manner certain contingent provisions for younger children, with which we have nothing to do. The youth who now claims the property is the grandson of the person who sold the estate to your father, and the papers necessary to prove his claim were discovered, I hear, by a Mr. Carr, with whom I well remember your father once had a severe dispute concerning what he believed to be a very nefarious transaction, in which poor Lady Malcolm suffered severely. Thus, as the character of the finder of this document is undoubtedly very bad, and the young man himself not the most prepossessing person in the world, I naturally concluded that the will might be manufactured. The parties gave me every opportunity of examining the document with my own lawyer and yours; and your friend, Mr. Wills, whose eyes you know are very sharp where your interests are concerned,

remembered that there is an old clerk still living who belonged to the house, the name of which is upon one of the documents. This clerk, after some difficulty, was discovered, and, I am sorry to say, he remembers distinctly having seen the will itself, when it was submitted on some legal point to the house with which he served his time. I have at once caused the whole case to be laid before the highest legal authorities, and send you their opinion. You will see that they believe you could keep the claimants out of the estate for years, but must yield at last, as the case is quite clear. It is for you to decide; but I think I know how you will act. The worst part of the whole, however, is still to be told: the estate has been in possession of your family for thirty years, and though the fault lies not with you or yours, but in the fraudulent conduct of the man who sold it, you are held to be responsible for all the rents which have been received, and which now amount to more than a hundred and fifty thousand pounds. You could recover the ninety-three thousand pounds with interest, if the man who sold the estate had left any assets; but the present claimant comes in as heir of entail, and his grandfather, who illegally sold the estate, died in poverty. Perhaps a composition may be entered into in regard to these back rents, and, at all events, we must obtain time for the payment, as, I believe, that after the purchase of the small estate in Sussex, there remained no more of the guardianship account than fifty thousand pounds, and it would take ten years of the whole rents of the Morley Court property to clear off the sum still unpaid. Unauthorized by you, I have of course not been able to act; but I beg of you to write to me at once, giving me your own views."

The banker went on to consider the subject in various ways, but the terrible fact remained, that one estate was virtually gone, another deeply encumbered, and that all the long and careful savings of his minority were to be swept away at once.

What was the effect upon Morley Ernstein? Very different from that which might be supposed. The first blow was undoubtedly startling; he looked round like one bewildered; re-read what Mr. Hamilton had written; and then turning to the legal opinions inclosed, perused them accurately. They confirmed but too fully the account which his banker had given, and Morley Ernstein made up his mind in an instant. After the first stunning effect of the intelligence was over, it seemed to give him strength and energy; and merely telling Lieberg that he must instantly answer the letter he had received, he quitted the room, sent for his writing-desk, and applied himself busily, and with a steadfast mind, to put down, in a letter to Mr. Hamilton, the resolutions which he had immediately taken.

"My dear Mr. Hamilton," he said, "I will never defend an untenable cause. The present case is one in which it is very difficult, if not impossible, for the law to deal justly with both parties, and proves the utter absurdity of the axiom, which we hear so continually repeated by lawyers, that according to English law there is no wrong without a remedy. A notorious and shameful fraud was evidently committed in the sale of the Warmstone estate to my father, and in the concealment of the entail. The law has now only to judge which must suffer—myself, or the persons on whom it was entailed. Perhaps it is right that I should be the victim; but at all events, a wrong is done and suffered somewhere. You have my full authority to concede the whole question, to give up Warmstone to the rightful owners, and to make the best arrangement that you can for paying the back rents with as little inconvenience as possible. All that I have in the funds must be immediately sold out for that purpose; but you say that there will still remain about a hundred thousand pounds to be paid. Morley Court I will part with on no account—not an acre of it; and the other little estate in Sussex, if sold, would still be but a drop of water in the ocean. What I propose, then, is this: immediately to cut off every superfluous expense, and to live, as many do, comfortably and happily upon the rents of the Sussex estate—seven hundred and thirty pounds per annum, I think we made it. This is not poverty, my dear sir, though the change is certainly great to me, but still I can endure it without a murmur. The Morley Court estate I propose to place immediately in the hands of trustees, for the purpose of paying off the debt. In the first place, the house and grounds must be kept up in the most thorough repair; the game must be properly protected; none of the old servants or labourers must be discharged. I would rather deprive myself of every superfluity than such should be the case. As near as I can recollect, not having my accounts with me, these charges amount to about eleven hundred per annum. That paid, there will still remain between nine and ten thousand per annum, to discharge the amount now claimed, and in eleven years it will be done. I have a considerable sum with me here, in money and letters of credit; but there are various things to be paid, some old people and pensioners to be provided for, and thus I shall soon get through that which I have. I think these proposals are so fair that they will not be refused, especially if by any chance one of those extraordinary coincidences, which sometimes cross us in life, has occurred in this instance, as I am led to suspect by some words in your letter. Is the young man you mention a fair-haired, pale-faced lad, with a look of sickly dissipation about him? If so, I rather imagine I once saved him from the gallows, and it is his sister, in regard to whom I wrote you a long epistle. Shakspeare says that our bad deeds turn round and whip us; but it would seem that our good deeds do so too, if I am to lose almost all I possess in consequence of having interposed between this youth and destruction. I am sorry to say that, owing to the uncertain course I have pursued, your letter has been lying here for two months;"—and Morley went on to enter into the details of the changes he intended to make in his own mode of living, and to give directions for all the necessary papers to be forwarded for his signature as speedily as possible. When he had concluded he returned to the saloon, where he found Lieberg seated near one of the windows, gazing forth in meditation.

"I am afraid, Morley," said the latter, as soon as he heard his friend's step, "that you have had bad tidings from England."

"I have," replied Morley. "You are a strange reader of human countenances, Lieberg. I thought I had guarded mine so carefully that no emotion could be apparent."

"It is my belief," rejoined Lieberg, "that everything that seems extraordinary may be accounted for with the most perfect ease; so that there is not a miracle, from the creation of this world down to Aaron's voracious walking-stick, which ate up the walking-sticks of all the Egyptians, that could not be explained to us in a single word, only that poor fool Eve, after having eaten half the apple, stopped short in a fright, and was not wise enough to make even one good meal of the tree of knowledge. See how everything that we think strange becomes ridiculously simple when it is explained. You judge me a great reader of countenances; now, I never looked at your face at all, but merely read my letters while you read yours, and there found news which of course has reached you."

"That I have lost a considerable property," replied Morley, "and have to pay back rents to an immense amount."

"And are you aware to whom?" demanded Lieberg.

"I suppose, from the similarity of the name, and from the description of my friend, Mr. Hamilton," Morley answered, "it is to that William Barham of whom you and I know a good deal."

"To be sure," rejoined Lieberg, with his eye flashing; "I felt certain that something of the kind would happen at the time."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Morley, with much surprise; "how so?—why so?"

"Because," replied Lieberg, with his lip curling, "I never saw a man caress a scorpion, or put a viper in his bosom, that, sooner or later, he was not stung. Would to God I had hanged him!"

"I am much obliged to you for your kind interest," replied Morley, with a melancholy smile; "but if the thing was destined to happen at all, I am well pleased that it is as it is—not for the sake of that weak and vicious young knave, but for his sweet sister's sake. He will only use his fortune ill; but she will, of course, come in for a part, and thus be placed in a station for which she was evidently intended by Heaven. But now, Lieberg, let us speak of something more immediate. I am sorry to say our companionship must soon end; as I have assigned the greater part of my property to pay off this unexpected debt, retaining to myself not more than seven hundred a-year, all my expenses must, of course, be curtailed, and I can no longer afford to travel in the way that befits you."

"Nonsense, Morley," replied his companion; "you can very easily reduce your expenditure to the scale required, without depriving me of the pleasure of your society, or yourself of the gratification and advantage of travelling with so pleasant and instructive a companion as myself. You can diminish your whole host of lackeys, send your old grey-headed friend to England, and keep the most useful of your men. Get rid of your courier, in the very first place, both because you don't want him, one being quite enough for you and me; and, secondly, because he is a very bad one, while mine is the best that ever cheated a master, bullied an innkeeper, defrauded a postilion, or gave a hint to a bandit. Then, as for the rest, we need not travel more rapidly than suits your purse; you shall pay for whatever additional horses are necessary to my carriage, in consequence of your being with me, but, of course, no more; and, I can assure you, all this may be done upon even less than you propose. Try, at least,—try for a few months! If you refuse to do so, I shall conceive that you take advantage of this circumstance to draw off your forces."

Morley felt that he could not refuse to make the experiment, though he certainly had misgivings; but he steadfastly and strictly held his resolution of curtailing all his expenses, from that very moment. He explained to his servants, that he had met with a severe loss, and though a younger and more active attendant might have been preferable, in many respects, yet he retained no one about his person, but old Adam Gray, knowing that the good man would feel pained not to serve him, even though he were to pension him off, and leave him to spend his latter days in peace. His carriage he immediately ordered to be sold, and for want of knowledge how far his limited income would go, denied himself, at first, many an indulgence which he could very well afford. He divided his expenses into weeks, and almost into days, and bound himself down to all those small and narrow economies which are always a painful thing to a generous mind, and are only to be compensated by the internal satisfaction of doing that which is just and right.

Upon the whole, the circumstances in which he was so suddenly placed, proved beneficial to the heart of Morley Ernstein. He had other subjects for thought given him, besides the bitter disappointment which he had endured. He had now matter for activity, energy, determination, self-denial. He had to keep his spirit from repining at petty evils, he had often to struggle with his inclinations upon small points, and that habit gave him power to strive more successfully on greater occasions.

The conduct of Lieberg towards him was, apparently, all that was kind. At first, while he knew that the weight which had been suddenly cast upon his young friend, had produced a great reaction of the mind, he tempted him in no degree to go beyond the limits of a strict economy; but as the immediate effect wore away, he certainly did cast inducements in his companion's path, to spend money which might have been spared. Two or three times, too, when tempted suddenly, Morley forgot his altered circumstances, and yielded without consideration. He bought things that were unnecessary, he gave an order which he was sorry for but would not rescind; and Lieberg with pleasure saw a probability of leading him to overstep the bounds of the income he had left himself, and plunging him into difficulties which might bring on more false steps to remedy.

For the present, however, Morley was safe;

for the sum which he had brought with him from England was so much larger than he required, on his reduced scale of expenditure, that he could fall back upon it at any moment, though he did so with regret.

Thus passed a month in Rome; and though Morley Ernstein often thought of Juliet Carr, and wondered whether she was or was not in the same town with himself, he met her not in public or in private, while the period of his stay in Rome wore rapidly away.

CHAPTER LIII.

BY THE ROAD-SIDE.

In early youth there are pleasures in all seasons of the year; and, as the schoolboy-story goes, it is difficult to choose between the glowing summer, with its brightness and its smiles—the sweet spring, with its soft breezes and its flowers—the brown autumn, with its fruits, and days of harvest—and the hardy winter, with its sports, and merry nights. But, believe me, reader, as one advances in life, the days that we would choose are always warm ones; and putting the brighter season of the year out of the question, the only difficulty is, to say, which is most grateful; that brief return of summer-like hours, which generally takes place in the commencement of November—like that return of prosperity towards the end of life, which sometimes brightens the fate of men who have long struggled with adversity; or the burst of warmth and sunshine, which often, in the early Spring, forestalls the summer—like the splendid vision of a great and glorious career which presents itself in hours of meditation to the unchastised eyes of youth.

It was in the end of February, however, with days warmer than many in June, with a balmy air, and a clear sky, that some travellers, with whom the reader is already well acquainted, took their way as nearly as possible by the same course that Morley Ernstein had pursued towards the classic land in which he was now sojourning.

Nor let it seem strange and romance-like, or make any one doubt the accuracy of this true history, that three parties of people, without any common consent amongst them, are here represented taking exactly the same path to a particular object, when there were five or six other roads open before them. Ay, but dear, reader, it is the very question which you are begging. If you remember rightly, at the period of which we are now speaking, a tremendous storm had swept the Alps, greatly injuring two of the principal passages; the Splugen was impassable, neither of the St. Bernards could be thought of either very late or very early in the year; and Mont Cenis could only be passed in Traineaux; but the Brenner was and is passable, and convenient at all seasons, though sometimes the traveller is very cold before he gets at it. The convenience of this passage, especially to an invalid, in the early month of which we speak, was the cause why it was chosen by the party to whom we now return; for one of that party was an invalid.

It was on one of those warm days of February, then, which generally brighten a part of the coldest season of the year, that a splendid green chariot, quite new, with much more silver about it than was in good taste—with a courier behind, dressed out to the highest pitch of courierism—and a lady's maid, of a very different appearance, neat, plain, and staid—drove along one of the roads that traverse the Black Forest, taking its way towards the small town of Schaffhausen. The vehicle was, nevertheless, at the distance of several leagues from that place; and as it ascended one of the tall hills which diversify that part of the country, a wide extent of forest ground was displayed to the eye, undulating into all the most beautiful forms, with the yellow sun resting upon the bare, leafless branches of that ocean of trees, which—although not a bud could be perceived upon the closest inspection, nor the slightest promise of the spring—yet bore over all, when beheld from afar, a kind of misty bloom, which is not seen in the earlier part of winter, and is difficult to account for.

The air was so warm that Helen Barham, at the request of her sick brother—who was now journeying for his only chance of life, towards that land where so many of the children of the north have laid their bones—opened the window of the carriage, and let in the breath of spring, which for a time seemed to revive the invalid. She herself leant forward, and gazed over the prospect, enjoying it with a spirit attuned to everything that is beautiful, but with feelings saddened by a partial knowledge of her brother's perilous state; though William Barham himself, like most sufferers from the same malady, was utterly ignorant of the fate that hung over him, and had that very morning been cursing the doctors, for some little inconvenience which he had undergone at the last inn, declaring that if they had let him remain in England, he would have been well long before.

Helen gazed, as I have said, pleased but somewhat sorrowful; and, indeed, there is nothing on earth I know more melancholy, than to look over one of the bright scenes of nature with an eye fresh from the bed of deadly sickness. There is a strange and awful contrast in it: it makes life seem so utterly vain and worthless, that all we have been taught to prize turns suddenly, like the fabled fruits, to dust and ashes; and our heart sinks with a conviction of the emptiness of everything below, even before it can rise with the consciousness of a better state beyond.

Helen gazed, then, and meditated; and her lovely eyes filled with tears. At that moment her brother's voice said, "Helen;" but for a short time she would not look round lest he should see the drops upon her eyelids, and divine their cause. But the next moment, he repeated the word "Helen" in a tone that alarmed her, and when she did turn, his countenance alarmed her still more. His cheeks had become more hollow, the red spot which had been constantly there for some weeks was

gone, his temples seemed fallen in, and the thin light hair lay more wild upon his brow than usual. There was a transparent greyness, too, about the flesh which Helen had never seen before in him, but had marked it too well in another; and when once seen, it is never to be forgotten. At the same time a sort of spasmodic gasping seemed to convulse his chest, and his hands lay blue upon his knees.

"Helen!" he cried—"Helen! I feel very queer. Don't let them go on in this mist. Stop the carriage—I should like to get out. The air is so thick here I cannot breathe. Stop the carriage, girl, I say! Those d—d doctors, if they had but left me in England I should have been well by this time. That mist——"

Helen let down the window hastily, and called to the postilions to stop, but they did not hear her, and it was some time before she could catch the ear of the courier. At length, however, the carriage paused; and the door was opened, and, by a great effort, William Barham raised himself from his seat, and fell forward into the arms of the courier. The man carried him to the bank, and placed him at the foot of a tree, but the unhappy youth sunk back upon the grass with his eyes closed; while the same death-like pallor continued upon his countenance, and a quick, hard-drawn respiration shook his emaciated frame. Helen sprang from the carriage after her brother, and knelt beside him, her heart palpitating with apprehension, and her eyes filled with the tears of natural affection, no less keen and sensible because he who lay there dying before her had been so frequently the cause of pain, and sorrow, and anxiety. She bade the man bring water from the stream to throw upon his face; but though he went civilly to obey, yet he shrugged his shoulders, saying, in French—"It is of no use, Mademoiselle—he is dying."

Oh! of all the many painful things of earth, there are few more terrible than to stand by the side of a being that we deeply love, watching the last struggles of departing life, looking round for aid, consolation, and support, and finding about us none but indifferent strangers, who view our sorrow and its cause but as a scene upon a theatre. Though she knew that medical aid was useless, what would not Helen Barham have given, at that moment, for the presence of a physician, for the presence of any friend! But all she could do was to clasp her hands, and gaze through her tears upon the unanswering countenance of her brother, expecting every moment to see the spirit depart. After the courier had been gone for a minute, however, a hasty step called her attention, and then a voice which seemed familiar to her ear, asking aloud, in English—"What's the matter—what's the matter?"

Helen looked up, and the face of Harry Martin met her eyes.

"Oh, I am so glad to see you!" she exclaimed. "My brother—my brother!—he is dying, I am afraid."

Harry Martin said, in his own heart, "And no bad job either!" But there was too much of the milk of human kindness mingled with his rough nature to let him utter one word which could pain poor Helen Barham at that moment.

"I am very glad to see you, ma'am," he replied; "but sorry to find you in such a state. But why did you take the young man out of the carriage? The place they call Steig is only two miles off; the doctor will be there in half-an-hour, to see our poor old woman who broke her leg. Better put him in again, Miss. Take the maid with you, inside; I'll jump up behind, and we'll soon be there."

The courier came back with some water in his hands, but though thrown upon the face of the unhappy youth, it produced no effect, except a slight shudder which passed over his frame. The suggestion of the man Harry Martin was then followed. He himself carried the almost lifeless body of William Barham to the carriage, and placed him in it; while Helen, taking her seat beside him, supported his head upon her arm, and the door being closed after the maid had entered, they proceeded on their way.

The postilions drove quick—much more so, indeed, than any money would have induced them to do—and in about twenty minutes the chariot stood before the little post-house. Much to the satisfaction of Harry Martin, the surgeon who had been attending old Mrs. More was seen, as they came up, in the very act of getting into his ancient caleche, to rumble back again to Freidburg, and, springing down, the Englishman stopped him, and told him what had occurred. The surgeon followed him instantly to the side of the vehicle, but when they came up, the post-master, the servants, and the courier were all whispering round, Helen's beautiful face was buried in her handkerchief, and the dead body of William Barham lay beside her, with the head resting upon her shoulder.

Harry Martin sprang round to the other side of the chariot, opened the door, and, raising the corpse in his powerful arms, bore it into the inn. Helen started, and looked round for a moment, as she felt the weight that had leaned upon her removed; but then bent down her head again, and once more covering her eyes, wept bitterly, without making any movement to quit the carriage. In another instant, however, Harry Martin was at the door again, and gently laying his hand upon her sleeve, he called her attention, saying—"You must get out, Miss Barham, I fear, for there is much to be done.—Be comforted, madam," he added, in a low tone—"be comforted. Ay, and thank God! Remember, it might have been worse—much worse."

Helen dried her tears, and entered the inn, where much sad business lay before her. Luckily, however, she was amongst kind-hearted and honest people, and the only effort that was made to wrong her in any respect was on the part of her brother's courier. He was detected in pilfering and cheating, on the day after the funeral of William Barham, by the keen eyes of Harry Martin, who, as he himself said, not knowing the laws of the country, ensured that the rogue should not go without punishment by thrashing him most terribly on the spot, and at the moment. He then reported his conduct

to Miss Barham, and the man was accordingly dismissed, so that Helen was left in a small German village, without any counsel or assistance of the kind and character which she most needed, to choose her own plans, and to follow out the curious windings of that fate which had placed her in so many an unforeseen position through life. She had been compelled to choose her course before, in circumstances that may seem to the reader far more difficult; but, strange to say, now that great wealth was at her command, and that all the self-named friends and humble servants who are always ready to bow down and worship at the shrine of the great god of this world, were prepared to court and seek her, and show her kindnesses and attentions, not the slightest of which her high qualities of mind and heart would have won from them had she remained poor,—strange to say, she felt more embarrassed, more anxious, more doubtful in acting for herself, than she had felt when left, by her father's death, to provide by her own exertions food for her brother and herself.

At one time she thought of returning to England; and, perhaps, had she been a person to consult the dictates of prudence alone, she would have done so; but alas! reader, Helen Barham was not by nature a prudent person. She was good, indeed,—she was very good; and she had strong and fine principles, but it was from her heart that her goodness proceeded —in her heart that her principles dwelt. On the present occasion there was some secret longing—some inclination hidden from herself which made her anxiously desire to go on towards Italy; and though, at first, she felt some sort of fear at the mere idea of doing so, of taking so long a journey by herself, of encountering strange scenes, and strange people, and undergoing all the dangers and difficulties of the road, yet these apprehensions soon disappeared, and she reasoned down every other objection in her own mind.

Nor did many real obstacles present themselves. All her brother's affairs had been settled before she left England, and she came in as the clear and sole heir, he having died under age, of the whole property which they had lately acquired. The steps necessary to be taken in consequence of his decease, the lawyers were very willing to carry through without her presence, and Helen having once written to England and received an answer, openly took the resolution of going on to Italy,—speaking the truth when she said that she herself did not feel well, and would probably be better for the air of a milder climate.

There was a difficulty, indeed, in procuring an honest and respectable servant, and her experience of the last courier did not tend to give her any great confidence in that sort of cattle. But she was not destined to proceed alone. The man Martin and his wife had shown her that devoted attention and respect which could only spring from deep gratitude; and although the good old lady, Mrs. More, was still in a very feeble and even dangerous state, they had lost no opportunity of offering to Helen every attention and assistance. The funeral of William Barham had been arranged and carried through by Harry Martin himself, who had by this time learnt to converse in a somewhat barbarous kind of German, and many of the painful particulars which attend the act of committing our kindred clay to the earth had been spared to Helen by his consideration for her.

When he now heard that she was going on to Italy, he made all the preparations, took her orders, as if he had been her servant, and often gazed wistfully in her face, with a look that seemed to imply there was something in his mind which he wished to speak, without presuming to do so. He often, too, held long consultations with his wife; and, in the end, he came one morning suddenly into the room which Helen had made her sitting-room, saying, without any preface—"I can't think of your going to Italy by yourself, Miss Helen. I know you talk of getting a courier fellow at Schaffhausen or Constance; but bless you, ma'am, he's as likely to cheat you as the other, and you are going into a place where there are blackguards of all sorts. Now, it's very possible, ma'am, that, from what you know of me, you may think I am not a very likely person to take with you, and that I may just prove as bad as the rest of them you would meet with; but I give you my word of honour, that I never cheated any one in my life, though many a time I have done, perhaps, what may be worse. But, however, I would not wrong you in any way for a great deal more than the world, and if you were to give me to keep for you a hundred thousand pound without counting it, you should have every farthing back again, if I were starving."

"I am quite sure of it, Martin," replied Helen Barham, with one of her sweet confiding smiles; "I should not in the least mind putting all I have in the world in your hands. But what is it you wish to propose? You could not quit this poor lady in her present state——"

"Why, Miss Helen," replied Harry Martin, "that is just what I have been talking to my wife about. She is not the least afraid of staying here to attend to her mother, till I go with you to Italy and come back again. What I want is, just to go along with you, on the outside of the carriage, to see that nobody does you any harm. You can get a courier fellow where you can find one, for you see I know nothing about that sort of business, and should not exactly like such a thing either; but I will see that he keeps all straight, and when once you are safe, and amongst people who will love you, and take care of you, as you ought to be, I can come back again, or Jane can come to me, as the case may be."

Helen took a day to consider, but her consideration ended in her adopting the plan which was proposed; and though she obtained a courier with a good recommendation, Harry Martin attended her onward into Italy.

CHAPTER LIV.

AN ASTOUNDING DISCOVERY.

THAT season of the year was approaching when it is necessary for foreigners to quit Rome, if they hold their life very dearly; and Morley Ernstein, though certainly with no thought of malaria, had more than once proposed to Lieberg to pursue their way to Naples; but for some reason best known to himself, the latter had always made some excuse to delay. In the mean time, he surrounded Morley Ernstein with temptations of all sorts, upon which we will not dwell, having already displayed the course which he followed, and the means which he took, and it being unnecessary to repeat nearly the same story. He did not succeed, it is true, to any great extent. Some few pieces of extravagance Morley certainly was led to commit—some few acts which he regretted—not many, but enough to give Lieberg encouragement to pursue his plan with good hope of success at last; for the water does not more certainly wear the stone over which it passes than a constant familiarity with vicious scenes destroys the moral principle in the heart of man.

Morley Ernstein would not approach the gaming-table, however, neither would he drink to anything like excess, though that also was tried by his dear friend, who well knew, that, as in the case of the Santon, one folly of such a kind opens the door to vices of all sorts. It may be asked what was the object of all this?—it may be said that there must be a motive for all human actions. Reader, I cannot clearly tell you what the object was; and Lieberg's conduct certainly seemed more fiend-like than human. He afterwards, indeed, uttered some dark words, which were never explained, and might be untrue; but if there was not some deep-seated cause of enmity towards Morley Ernstein in his bosom, arising in circumstances that we know not, we can only guess at his purposes and motives. To degrade Morley in the eyes of Helen Barham, was certainly one end in view; but besides this, we have seen that his young companion had on more than one occasion thwarted him in an object of passion, had mortified his vanity and wounded his pride; and if we take these causes of offence, acting upon a malignant mind, together with the natural antipathy that the evil feel towards the good, and the jealous hatred of a man who sees another preferred by the being that he loves, the motives may, perhaps, be considered sufficient for his conduct. There may, indeed, have been something more—I am inclined to believe it was so—but what, I know not.

The struggle was still going on with Morley Ernstein between temptation and resistance, when, one day, as he was passing along the Piazza del Popolo, he saw a magnificent carriage, undoubtedly of English construction, standing before the great hotel, the name of which I forget, with two or three servants round the door, and the usual quantity of lackeys, couriers, and ciceroni at the entrance of the inn. When his eyes first lighted upon it he was at a considerable distance; and while he was still some thirty yards off, a lady came out of the hotel with a quick step, and entered the vehicle. The door was closed, the order given where to drive, and the carriage, taking a turn, dashed past Morley the moment after. There was an earl's coronet and emblazoned arms upon the panel, and Morley, raising his eyes to the window, beheld the countenance of Juliet Carr. How often had he seen that face with joy—ay, even after hope had passed away; and the first sensation had always been pleasure; but now, there was something in Juliet's dress and appearance—something in the magnificence of the equipage—something, perhaps, in his own pre-conceived suspicions, which made the sight of her he loved feel like a heavy blow upon his heart. She evidently did not see him, and was speaking with a smile to some one else who was in the vehicle with her. Morley paused for an instant to recover breath, and then advancing to the inn, determined to have his doubts satisfied, he asked an English servant, who was still gazing after the carriage, whose it was.

The man was one of those saucy English footmen who are the disgrace of many of our noble houses; and to any one but a man of Morley's distinguished appearance he might have made an insolent reply. To him, however, he answered, in a civil tone—"The Countess of Clavering, sir."

"Lord Clavering has not long been married, I think," said Morley, in as firm a voice as he could command.

"About a month, sir," replied the man, with a grin, "and he has already gone back to England to attend the house of peers. That was my lady who just drove away."

Morley turned with his heart burning and his brain whirling round; but, pausing after he had taken a step or two, with a bitter smile curling his lip, he took out his card-case, and, walking back, gave the man a card, saying—"That for Lady Clavering, with my congratulations."

The attempt to describe the feelings of Morley Ernstein, when the full agony burst upon him, would indeed be vain. His passionate indignation approached nearly to madness; his bitter, bitter anguish of spirit might have tempted him, at that moment, to commit any act which his worst enemy could wish. He felt it—he knew it to be so—his command over himself was gone, and he feared to return to the inn where he had left Lieberg, lest he might be led into some irretrievable step of folly or of vice. He wandered, then, through the streets of Rome for several hours, with the hurried pace and unequal step of a man torn by terrible emotions. He saw nothing that passed him; his eye marked none of the objects it rested upon; his spirit, busy within itself, seemed to have lost communication with the bodily senses; and it was nearly night when he was recalled to himself by some one suddenly seizing his arm, and exclaiming—"What is the matter, Morley? I have been following you this half-hour, and you do not seem to know where you are going, or what you are doing."

"Nor do I, Lieberg," replied Morley. "All I have undergone is not equal to this."

"Nay, nay," said Lieberg; "come back to the hotel, and tell me what is the matter. By keeping your griefs and anxieties to yourself you more than double them; and not only that, but you are unjust to me. In striving to suggest those things which might divert your mind without knowing what it is that weighs upon it, I very often may propose the worst things when I wish to offer the best. I beseech you, Morley, tell me all."

"I will, Lieberg—I will," replied Morley; "but let us go home first;" and walking quickly on by the side of his companion he took his way to the hotel, where, casting himself into a chair, he covered his eyes with his hands for two or three minutes to collect his thoughts, and then gave Lieberg a hurried and confused account of his attachment to Juliet Carr, and all that had occurred in the course of that true love, which had run even more roughly than is usually the case with the troubled course of human affection.

After he had brought his narrative up to the events of Venice, he paused, and Lieberg replied—"I had known something of all this, Morley, but not accurately, and I see I have made several mistakes in dealing with you. I did not know that you loved her so intensely. You may think me light, but my passions and attachments are as strong, or stronger than your own. I believed that you would have acted, if you truly loved her, as I would have acted under similar circumstances, that you would have pursued her, struggled against her resolutions, combated her arguments, set at nought idle vows, and ultimately won her for your happiness and for her own. But I forgot, Morley, that you are less experienced in all things than I am, and though passion may give the impetus to action, it is experience that must guide it to success. I forgot this, I say, and fancying that you loved her with one of those half loves, which may be diverted by pleasures and occupations, or swallowed up in another attachment, I endeavoured to lead your mind upon a course it could not follow. Now, however, I am convinced that you do love—at least I believe so, but I shall soon see, by the steps which you once take when your eyes are open. You seem to think that she has true affection for you; and, though from your agitation now, I suppose you have seen her again, and that she has once more treated you with the same cruel coldness, if you do love her, you will pursue her with that vigour of determination which will sweep away all obstacles. There is a might in real passion to which all inferior things soon bow, and which woman's heart can never resist, even for an hour, when once convinced that it is truly present. But that conviction cannot be produced by any sign of weakness,—you must show her that you love her, as none but strong and powerful hearts can love. That you are resolved to possess her, or to die——"

"Vain, vain, vain!" cried Morley, in bitterness of spirit. "It is all now in vain; she did love me; but driven by some promise extorted by her father, I suppose, she is now the wife of another!"

Lieberg started, and gazed upon him in surprise, then grasped his arm, and, with his dark star-like eyes fixed on his face, exclaimed—"Take her from him! What right has he to possess her? Is she not yours? Yours by the bond of the heart's affection—yours by the tie that is beyond the earth—yours by the union of spirit with spirit! Talk not to me of human laws and ordinances, where the soul itself recognizes a rule that is defined. You are her husband, if with the true intensity of heaven's own fire you love her and she loves you. You are her husband, I say, and every hour of her union with another is adultery. Take her from him, Morley—take her from him, be he who he may. Scruple at no means, stop at no pitiful considerations; it is due to her as well as to yourself—it is due to her in every sense. Think, think of the long and lasting misery that she must endure. Do you not know—are you not sure that every hour she must recollect you? What human ordinance will blot you out from her memory? What empty words, spoken at an altar, will erase from her heart the husband of her early dreams. Morley, if you are a lover—if you are a man—you will spare that sweet, mistaken girl the hell-fire tenderness of him whom she cannot love!"

"Hush, hush, hush!" cried Morley. "You will drive me mad!"

"You are mad already, Morley," replied Lieberg, "or you would fly to her at once. You would show her the brow which she loves, scathed with the lightning of passion, the form of him to whom she promised heaven, blighted by the consuming hell of disappointed affection. You would call upon her to remedy the wrong that she has committed—you would urge her with those words of power, the omnipotent magic of love, to save you from despair, destruction, and death, and to give you back the joy of which she has robbed you."

Thus did he proceed, reader, adding to the words he spoke that overpowering eloquence of look, gesture, and tone, which has far more effect than language, but can never be described. Let it be remembered, too, that this was addressed to Morley Ernstein at a moment when the whole powers of his mind were shaken by the agony he endured, when reason herself tottered on her throne, and despair had broken down the great prop of all good principle—hope. He sat and listened, not without a knowledge that there was wrong and evil in the words he heard; but it was but as a man for whom all life's joys and expectations are extinct, and who, in a moment of frenzied desperation, takes quietly the cup he knows to be poisoned, and drains it with a bitter smile.

At length, however, he rose, and said, "Lieberg, I will leave you for to-night. I cannot converse with any one—my story is scarcely told, but a few words more will do it. She is married to a man as old as her father—to a Lord Clavering——"

"Why, he is just gone to England!" exclaimed Lieberg.

"I know it," answered Morley, "and has left her here."

"Fly to her, Morley—fly to her!" cried

Lieberg, grasping his hand—"fly to her this very night!"

"No," answered Morley, "no! Whatever I do, I must have time for thought."

Thus saying, he left him, and in the silence and solitude of his own chamber paced up and down for more than an hour, with the better spirit within him struggling vehemently against the spell, but too weak to cast it off by its own efforts.

"I must fly," he said to himself, at length—"I must fly from this man, or he will destroy me. I will fly speedily, both from him and from the presence of her who has cast away my happiness and her own. To-morrow I will seek for the means, and to-night I will see him no more. I will throw off his dangerous companionship. To avoid evil is the next thing to conquering it."

He opened the door to call his servant Adam Gray; the old man was sitting at the other side of the antechamber, and looking eagerly towards the entrance of his master's room.

"I have knocked twice, sir," he said, "but you did not hear me."

"I was busy with very sad meditations, Adam," replied his master.

"I thought so, sir," answered the old man, simply, "for I saw to-day the person who always causes them—I wish I might say all——"

"Say nothing, my good Adam—say nothing upon that subject," replied Morley.

"No; I must not tell anything now, sir," rejoined Adam Gray, "but the time will come for me to speak."

"You said you knocked," continued Morley, gravely; "what do you want?"

"Why, sir," replied Adam, "there's another person in Rome besides her; a person whom you will be glad to see, I think; and who will be glad enough to see you, poor thing!"

"Who is that?" demanded his master; the expression, "poor thing," showing him that his old servant spoke of some person he believed to be attached to him, and making his mind immediately turn to Veronica. Alas, he never thought of Helen Barham!

"Why, sir, it is the young lady who was for some time with Lady Malcolm," replied Adam Gray. "Miss Barham, or Miss Helen, as her people always call her. I saw her maid looking about the town with the courier, about an hour or two ago, and told them where you were, so just now the courier brought this note for you."

Morley ordered lights into his room, and taking the note, read as follows:—

"My dear Sir;

"Although, under ordinary circumstance, it might seem strange for me to ask you to come to see me, yet I feel that it would show a want of gratitude were I to be in the same city with yourself and not tell you that I am here. But I have another excuse for that which I acknowledge I am very willing to do. You are, I dare say, aware, by this time, of my poor brother's death, and that the property which, to my great regret, he claimed and obtained from you, has descended to me. There is still, however, some business to settle in regard to it, which I am sure he would have wished to arrange himself as I propose, if his life had been spared to do so. In regard to these arrangements, I could much wish to speak with you, as well as to assure you that I am, ever most truly,

"Your grateful,

"Helen Barham."

"P.S. I will wait at home to-morrow till you call, unless you let me know that it is inconvenient to do so on that day."

Morley answered the note at once, and named the hour, and this return to the ordinary things of life had some effect in calming his mind again. Twice he asked himself why Adam Gray had called Helen "poor thing," but he turned his thoughts away from the images to which the reply gave rise.

CHAPTER LV.

HONOURABLE RENUNCIATION.

Pale, haggard, and sick at heart, Morley Ernstein rose from his sleepless bed, and made preparations of various kinds for that speedy departure, which all the varied trains of thought that had visited his mind during the night had but shown him to be the more necessary. The next thing to be done was, to announce his determination to Lieberg, and for that purpose he proceeded to the saloon, where his companion was already seated at breakfast. There was a sparkling sort of smile upon Lieberg's countenance which Morley was never very fond of. He had often seen it precede conversations that ended or went on in a painful manner; but it was Lieberg's general plan never to commence any subject himself, except of an ordinary kind, and on this occasion, as usual, he suffered Morley to speak first, merely giving him the common salutation of the morning. Now, as we have shown, the character of Morley Ernstein was intimately mixed of good and evil, but he had one invariable quality, which was, frankness; at times carried too far, perhaps—too far, at least, for his own earthly interest: truth can never be carried too far for Heaven. In the present case, he not only told Lieberg his purpose, but he told him why; he acknowledged that he feared him; that their views on the subject which they had discussed on the preceding night were as different as light from darkness; but that he dreaded lest, under strong temptation, he might yield, and never cease to regret that he had so given way.

"I believe, Lieberg," he said, "that you wish me well, and would direct me to what you conceive to be happiness. My view of that not-to-be-found jewel, however, can never be the same as yours; and though I thank you much for your good wishes, yet I must pursue my own plan."

Morley paid no great attention to his companion's countenance while he spoke, and yet it was worth observing. There was once or twice

a look of displeasure, and once or twice a look of triumph, especially when the young Englishman owned that he feared his influence. A scornful smile marked his lip, too, when Morley spoke of proceeding at once; but the whole settled down into an expression of calm, well-satisfied pride, and he replied, attaching himself, in the first place, to the words, "My view of happiness can never be the same as yours,"—"You must come to it, Morley," he said—"you must come to it. The time will be, believe me, when you will find such happiness as mine the only happiness to be procured. However, be it as you will! Take your own way! Go to Naples at once, and wait for me there till I come. I will not be long after you; and then, as I shall have nothing to tempt you with, you may pursue your journey with me in safety, through the sunny land of Greece, and perhaps to the brighter and more ardent skies of Syria. There we shall see whether even your cold blood may not be warmed into a flame. But where go you after breakfast? Let us, at least, spend this last day of your stay in Rome together."

"I fear that cannot be," replied Morley; "I have various things to do, and have an engagement at eleven; but after two I am at your command."

Lieberg bit his lip, but made no reply, and Morley, as soon as he had finished his breakfast, left the saloon, and proceeded to his own chamber. It happened by the merest accident in the world, that after he had taken his hat and gloves, and given some additional orders to Adam Gray, he went out of his room by another door, on the side opposite to that which opened into the common vestibule, and issued forth from the hotel by a small staircase which he had only used twice before. It is true that, although he believed Helen Barham to be now placed by fortune far beyond Lieberg's pursuit, yet he felt no inclination to speak of her being in Rome at all; but still, in going out by the back way, he acted without premeditation, and without ever dreaming that he would be watched.

Had he gone through the anteroom, however, he would have seen that Lieberg's valet was waiting there; and there the man continued to sit, till Adam Gray came out of Morley's room, when a few words were interchanged between the two servants. The valet seemed surprised, and immediately went in to speak with his master; after which the old man's ear caught a furious imprecation, followed by a sound, as if the Count in his anger had struck the table a violent blow with his clenched fist.

In the mean while, Morley Ernstein walked on to the inn where Helen Barham was to be found, and, on asking for her, was immediately admitted. She rose as soon as she saw him, a little fluttered and agitated, but with the mounting colour in her cheeks, the slight quivering of her beautiful lip, and the dancing light in her dark eyes, all adding to that loveliness which in itself was incomparable. She strove hard to be calm and placid, and indeed would sooner have become somewhat cold than otherwise, but it was a difficult thing for Helen Barham to be so. I have heard people called creatures of impulse, but she was a creature of emotions—tender, fine, high, noble, but still trembling, like a finely-balanced lever, at the lightest touch. She could not restrain her feelings; and as Morley met her, she looked so happy with her resplendent beauty, with all her wild grace, with light, and soul, and tenderness in her eyes—she seemed to possess so much of everything that God can give to content the utmost expectations of a human creature, that Morley was forced to ask himself again why it was the old man had called her "Poor thing!" Morley fell into a very common error, notwithstanding all his own experience. It is, that we always make a mistake as to the source of happiness. It springs from within, and not from without. It is the water that gushes from the rock of our own hearts, not the rain that dimples the stream, adding but a few drops to the current.

"I am most delighted to see you," said Morley, taking the hand she offered; "and though I know you must feel the loss of your brother deeply, yet I must still congratulate you on your accession to the fortune you now possess. I was always sure, my dear Miss Barham, that you would do honour to high station and extensive means, and I thank God that I see you now possessed of them!"

"If I had had either voice or choice in the matter," replied Helen, earnestly, "I never would have become possessed of them in such a way. A very small portion would have contented me; and the superabundance which I do possess is rather a burden than otherwise, especially as I feel that, to have taken it from you, is to have turned our heel against our benefactor."

"Not at all," answered Morley Ernstein. "It was perfectly your brother's right; and as soon as I became convinced that it was so, I could not have held the estate for a single hour. Neither did your brother behave at all unhandsomely in any of the proceedings regarding it——"

"Nay—nay," said Helen, holding up her hand—"though he did not, Sir Morley, and I believe would ultimately have done what was right, yet his lawyers did behave unhandsomely in his name; but I have immediately taken means to remedy what was amiss."

"I do not know what you have done, my dear Miss Barham," said Morley, with a smile; "but I trust and hope that your kind and generous feelings have not induced you to undo anything that has been settled. What the law gives you, is yours; and as far as I am concerned in the matter, I cannot consent to your making any sacrifice—honour and common honesty forbid me; and now, having said this, let me inquire what it is that you have done?"

Helen was sitting beside him on the sofa, and for a moment she raised her bright eyes to his, with a look of internal satisfaction mingled with regard, which, if Morley had chosen to translate it, might have been read—"I have done that which gives me the highest delight, because you must and will approve it." But she did not answer exactly in those words, and withdrew her eyes again immediately, with a sigh, and a look of sadness, as if she saw some

thing in Morley's countenance which she had not remarked before.

"What I have done," she said, "is only what is just and right. There has been no generosity—no flights of what people call fine feeling in it; and I think you will confess at once that it is so, and not give me the greatest pain, by refusing to accede to that which your own heart will tell you is just, merely because it is proposed to you by a person whom you have already loaded with benefits. I think," she added, in a lower but not less eager tone, "you would not willingly make me very unhappy."

"God forbid!" replied Morley, warmly. "What is there that I would not do to make you happy?"

Helen's cheek became a little pale, and, for a moment, she did not answer; but finding that he paused also, she said—"The fact is, simply, this: the property which my brother claimed, and recovered, was bought from my grandfather, who, I am told, was the most careless and thoughtless of men. He did not, I am sure, intend to defraud your father, and acted without consideration. But, at all events, your father paid ninety-three thousand pounds for the estate; and the lawyers tell me, that if my grandfather had been still living, you could have claimed and recovered that sum from him. It is but just, then, that I should pay it back to you, and I have told the people in London, to place it immediately in the hands of your friend, Mr. Hamilton.—Nay, now," she added, "do not look grave and thoughtful—you heart tells you that what I propose is right."

"But—" said Morley Ernstein.

"Nay, nay," interrupted Helen, playfully; "I will have no buts. Tell me, Sir Morley, in former days—to remember which, connected with your kindness, will always be most delightful to me—did I not ever do what you told me, as soon as I was convinced that it was right?"

"You did, indeed," said Morley, with a smile; "but I wish first to be sure whether this is really right?"

"What would you do if you were in my place?" demanded Helen.

"As you have done," replied Morley.

"Ay, and perhaps more," said Helen. "You would do all that I should wish to do, but dare not offer, because I know you would reject it angrily."

"Not angrily—not angrily, with you," exclaimed Morley; "but firmly. You have already done as much, and more, than the most generous feeling could dictate; and as I believe it is a pleasure to you to do it, I will not refuse to accept what you propose, though I see that you do not know the whole circumstances. Let me tell you, then, my dear Miss Barham, what they are, in some degree; for if you feel a pleasure in doing a generous act, the satisfaction will be doubled when you know that act relieves one who has the greatest regard for you from a severe embarrassment."

He then explained to her, that the only means he had found of paying the large claims against him were, to assign the rents of almost all his landed property, to dismiss his servants, to curtail his expenditure, and to live upon an income comparatively small and pitiful. Helen's cheek first grew pale, and then burned with the hue of crimson; and as he went on she burst into a bitter flood of tears, exclaiming—"And we have done this!—we have done this!"

Morley took her hand, and pressed his lips upon it, saying—"Others have done it, and were not to blame. You have remedied it all, and how am I to thank you?"

"Oh, no, no!" she exclaimed—"I have not remedied it all; I fear that I still am robbing you—robbing you of that fortune which you used so nobly; and that, too, when I owe you everything—life, and more than life; for in the state I was when you found me, I could not have lived long, and should not only have died, but have died with shame and misery!—Ah! you cannot tell, Sir Morley," she continued, "how much sooner I would be a pensioner upon your bounty for a small pittance to supply my daily wants, than take from my benefactor that property which I cannot but feel of right is his."

"Not so, indeed!" answered Morley Ernstein; "it is not mine, Helen. It was of right your brother's, and is yours. I scarcely know, indeed, whether I am justified in not following out the plan that I had first proposed, and paying you all. But as you wish it, I will not insist upon that point; and now, tell me how you are, and let me hear all that has happened to you since we met."

"Why, I am well," replied Helen, wiping away the tears which still felt inclined to flow; "well, and yet not quite well. But speak of yourself—I scarcely dare to ask how you are, for I see that you are ill, Sir Morley."

"I must not have you call me by that name," said Morley Ernstein; "after the strange way in which our fate has been linked together, we can but look upon each other as brother and sister; and if you will let me, Helen, I will be a brother to you instead of him that you have lost."

"You have been a better brother already," replied Helen; "but you do not say, if you are ill; and yet I am sure you are, for you are so changed."

"I have had much to pain me, Helen," answered Morley Ernstein; "very much."

"I know it—I know it," said Helen; "and it has been our doing—Morley."

The last word she pronounced after a moment's hesitation, and in so low a tone that he scarcely heard it; but yet the blood came up into her cheek, as if she had told him that she loved him.

"It was not on that account, Helen, that I have grieved," he replied. "Fortune could never disturb my night's repose; but there have been many other things pressing heavily upon my mind."

Helen cast down her eyes, and replied not; but the paleness that crept over her countenance might well show that there were some emotions busy at her heart. Morley Ernstein was silent, too, for there was a light breaking upon him, to which he would have fain been blind. At length, Helen spoke, saying, with an effort—"I

was in hopes I should have heard of your being very happy."

"It is quite the reverse, Helen," he answered. "Those bright days, which you once saw me enjoy, are past away for ever, and I have nothing left but to fly from myself, and from her who might have made my happiness, and has made me miserable."

"Oh, no, no!" cried Helen; "do not say so."

"Yes, indeed!" replied Morley Ernstein. "It is on that account I quit Rome to-morrow. Are you aware that she is in the city?"

"Who?—Juliet Carr?" exclaimed Helen.

"She who was Juliet Carr," replied Morley, bitterly; "now, Countess of Clavering."

Helen started from her seat, and clasping her hands, gazed wildly in Morley's countenance. "It is impossible!" she cried; and then sinking down upon the sofa again, she buried her face in her hands, murmuring some words that Morley did not hear, while the crimson was seen dying her temples, and her fine small ear. What were the mingled emotions that at that moment possessed her?—Who can say? She herself was not aware; so strange, so complicated, so contending were they.

The first thing that roused her, was Morley's voice: "You say it is impossible, Helen," he replied. "I begin to think all things possible. When those whom we love best, and to whom, of all the world, we have given least cause to treat us ill, destroy our peace, betray our trust, cast away our love, and even sacrifice themselves for sordid motives, what may we not believe next?"

"O, you wrong her—you wrong her!" cried Helen Barham, raising her head, and speaking with enthusiastic eagerness. "You wrong her, Morley, most assuredly. There is something in this that you do not know—some cause she has for her conduct which will justify it, I am sure; or, at least, will palliate it. She may never be yours, but you must not cease to esteem her. I will take upon me to say, that she has not acted thus without some powerful, some overpowering motive."

"You judge her by your own heart, Helen," replied Morley. "No coronet would tempt you to such a union as this."

Helen would not be ungenerous, even by remaining silent, and she replied, eagerly, "You are wrong. She does love you,—she has ever loved you. She loves you still, whatever duty may say; and, though she may struggle to forget you, bound as she is to another, yet the struggle will be in vain, and will be more than a sufficient punishment for any weakness she may have shown."

Poor Helen Barham knew not that whilst she fancied she was but doing justice to Juliet, and soothing the agonized feelings of Juliet's lover, she was by every word giving force and vigour to the most terrible temptation which Morley had ever undergone. There seemed to be something peculiar in Lieberg's evil suggestions—something which made them resemble those of Satan himself. Every accidental circumstance gave them additional venom, and even words which were the most repugnant to all that is wrong, stirred them up in greater virulence and power than ever. Morley put his hands over his eyes, as if to shut out the temptation; but after a moment's pause, he rose, saying—"Helen, I must leave you. I will set out for Naples this very day, if it be possible. I take it for granted that your steps will soon be bent thither also. You must let me know when you arrive, for I believe the only society from which I could derive comfort and consolation, would be yours."

As he spoke he took Helen's hand, bidding her adieu, and she left it in his, gazing with an anxious and sympathizing look in his countenance, and thinking more of his sorrow than of the sweet and gratifying words that he addressed to herself.

"I will see Juliet," she said, "before I come. I believe that I can induce her to tell me all. You shall hear her motives as she gives them to me, for I would fain restore to her your esteem."

"Let it be as it is, Helen," replied Morley, solemnly; "for it is less dangerous for me to despise her than to love her still."

Thus saying he left her, and was hurrying home, with his thoughts so agitated that he scarcely remarked a man who stood in his way at the bottom of the stairs, till Harry Martin stopped him by pronouncing his name.

"I am afraid, Sir Morley," he said, as soon as the other paused—"I am afraid I gave you some offence by what I said to you in Germany, about some one that you trust. Now I——"

"You did, my good friend!" replied Morley; "but I was wrong, and you were right. All that is over—my eyes are opened, and I trust no more."

"That's right—that's right!" cried Harry Martin. "All may go well, then, and you may be as happy as the day is long; for if ever man was loved by an angel, you are, by one not very far from here."

"Hush!" cried Morley; "hush! You are mistaken altogether;" and, turning away, he hurried back as fast as possible to his own hotel, and quitted Rome ere the day was many hours older.

CHAPTER LVI.

THREATENING DANGER.

A MONTH passed in Naples, and Morley strove to drown recollection, to drown thought, to drown the ringing echo of the tempter's words, to quell, by any means, the struggle that still went on in his heart—the longing, eager, ardent desire to fly to Juliet Carr, to tell her, with all the impetuous madness of intense passion, that he loved her still, to show her that she had destroyed his peace for ever, and to leave her to decide, whether he were to live with her or to die by his own

hand. He knew that it was frenzy—he knew that it was crime. With as much courage as any ancient warrior ever strove, he fought against the host of dark temptations that beset him, in the vain hope that time would mitigate the intensity of his feelings; but time brought no balm—his heart knew no relief. The gay and gabbling crowd in the ball-room, the palace, and the theatre, distracted not his attention for a moment. With difficulty, even for a few minutes, did he fix his attention upon all the objects of ancient art, which formerly would have amused his fancy. The political strife of various parties which at that time convulsed all Europe, scarcely roused his mind from the bitter memories that were in his heart, to give it even a thought; and Morley's sole delight soon became to sail over the deep blue sea of the bay, gazing in melancholy listlessness upon the waters, and longing for a quiet abode beneath the rolling of those sunshiny waves.

It soon, however, grew a weariness and a pain to him, to be forced, even during a part of the day, to see and hear the merry multitudes of the siren city. The coarse and glaring vice, the utter moral degradation of almost all classes, the miserable laziness and destitution of the lower orders, the frivolous wickedness of the higher, all became an offence to his eyes; and he determined, at length, to get rid of the whole, and to remove to some distance from Naples, although there was one employment for a part of his day, which could not be obtained, without difficulty, anywhere but in the city. It may seem strange that this his sole occupation was the examination of almost all the principal London journals. But there was only one part of those journals into which he looked—only one name that he sought for. It was the name of Lord Clavering. From time to time, he found it amongst those of the most diligent attendants upon parliamentary duties. Morley read no more that day when he had once seen the name. He perused not the speech to which it was attached, nor examined the nature of the petition which the earl presented. He could not hate him more than he did, and he did not wish to hate him less; but still, to know that he was afar, that he was not in the same land with Juliet Carr, was something.

He resolved, at length, to quit the city, and take up his abode at such a distance that he could continually send into Naples, for intelligence, without setting his foot within the walls itself. The generous though just act of Helen Barham having removed the necessity for economy, Morley could indulge at ease whatever fancies suited his humour best at the time; and, rowing along the shores of the bay towards Sorrento, he pitched upon a solitary villa, not far from that place, towards Castelamare, as the house he should like to hire. It was seated upon the high rocky ground, and was visible from the sea; but on inquiring at the latter town, he found that there was no road to it but a mule-path, and that it was inhabited by the Italian family to whom it belonged. The latter difficulty, however, was speedily removed; gold was an object to the Italians, and none to Morley; and, while he had his boat, he needed no other road but the waves.

In this new abode, then, was he soon fixed, and certainly a lovelier scene never soothed the disappointed heart. The view over the bay was beyond description; a deep indentation of the shore brought the profound waters up to the very foot of the rock under the villa, and one of those arching caves, of which there are so many on the Sorrentine shore, admitted the sea still farther, so that a flight of steps from the house itself, similar to those near the villa Cocumella, led down by a subterranean passage to the verge of the bay; and Morley's boat could be brought in under the very crag on which his dwelling stood. A little farther on, however, a winding path, ornamented by some tall cypresses, led down to the shore, which was strewed at that spot with ruins of various ancient buildings, and covered almost to the edge of the sea with all the wild flowers and rich creeping plants of that climate, while here and there the gigantic aloe had planted itself, giving a peculiar character to the picture produced by no other European plant. High hills lay up behind; and, along the shore on both sides, appeared all that variety of rock, and precipice, and smooth descent, and soft sloping bank, which every one who has rounded that headland must remember. We will not dwell farther upon a description of the place, but will only add, that the usual drawback to all Italian scenery was found not far off, as one approached Sorrento, in numerous stone walls and narrow roads, forming a sort of labyrinth, which required some degree of knowledge and experience to escape from, in the attempt to find freer space upon the mountain-tops beyond.

Here Morley dwelt in comparative peace for about a fortnight, with his establishment restored to its former scale, and moreover increased by six rowers for his boat, to whom one of the cottages in the vineyard was assigned as an abode. Although so grave and sad, he had contrived to make himself loved even by the light-hearted Neapolitans in his service. There are few people more really sensible of dignified and graceful manners than the lower classes; and as we have already shown, there was a peculiar charm in the young Englishman's deportment, which only derived a greater interest from the gloom that had fallen over him. He was kind-hearted and generous, too, and the only efforts that now seemed to interest him strongly, were those tending to increase the comfort and happiness of the people about him. He taught them to obey him promptly, to attend, even in their lightness, to his smallest sign or word; but he taught them also to respect, admire, and love him.

Old Adam Gray, too—though, to say sooth, he was not fond of the Italians—was a favourite amongst them, and they were always ready to show him his way hither and thither, keeping up with him as he went along—partly by signs, partly by words—long conversations, of which neither party understood one-third.

It was thus one day, while his master was out sailing in the bay, that the old man had found

his way to Sorrento, accompanied by one of the Neapolitan servants, named Giacchino, who understood somewhat more of English than the rest. He had gazed about upon the houses and villas, had gone down to see the remains of antiquity that protrude in some places from the cliffs, and had bought a basket of fruit from one of the old women of the town, when suddenly—while he was yet counting out the interminable small pieces of coin, which seem invented, in several of the Italian States, for the torment of the passing traveller—he dropped a whole handful of them, exclaiming—"Good heavens, Mrs. Martin!—is that you? What could bring you to Italy?"

The person he addressed was a very pretty young woman, dressed in mourning, and her reply was simple enough, that she had followed her husband thither.

"Oh, I understand—I understand!" said Adam Gray; "though how he got out of York Castle I do not comprehend."

"No, you do not understand it at all," replied Jane. "My husband got out of York Castle by being pronounced innocent. But if you will come up to the villa just upon the hill, he will tell you the whole story himself. He came here out of Germany with dear Miss Helen, and I think he would like to see you, for we told him how kind you had been."

Without more ado, Adam Gray picked up the fallen money, and followed the young Englishwoman, leaving his Italian companion, Giacchino, talking with a number of men in pointed hats, and somewhat Calabrese attire, who had come in with the apparent purpose of selling fruit and small birds. When Giacchino joined them, however, they were engaged in gossiping away the time with a man in the habit of a courier, whom Adam Gray had seen more than once before loitering about the doors of their inn at Rome, where he had filled the post of occasional *valet de place*.

We need not pause upon the interview between Adam Gray and the party at the villa to which he was conducted; but he found that Harry Martin was still in attendance upon Helen Barham, not being able, he said, to make up his mind to leave her, always fancying that some mischief would happen, if he were not near to take care of her.

"It's a strange whim of mine," he said, "but I can't get rid of it. However, I know that Miss Helen sent a note to your master at Naples yesterday, and when I can see her with plenty of kind friends about her I shall be content, and think her safe."

Adam Gray remained for a full hour at the villa, and, before he went, begged to pay his respects to Helen herself, who sent a message by him to Morley, telling him where she was, and adding that she had something of importance to communicate to him, if he could call upon her the next day.

On returning to the spot where he had left his companion, the old man found the Neapolitan still laughing and chattering with the rest, and they proceeded on their way homeward together, both somewhat thoughtful, though the natural buoyancy of the Italian's spirit would not suffer him to bear the silence quite so long as the native of a more taciturn land.

"Those fellows will do some mischief before they are out of Sorrento," he said; "and that devil of a courier will lead them into no good."

"Ha!" cried Adam Gray, "do you know those people, then, Giacchino? Pray who may they be who are so mischievously disposed?"

"Why, that tall, good-looking fellow," replied the man, "was the head of the banditti that used to rob about Nocera and Salerno, and sometimes almost up to Portici on the other side. He gave it up of his own accord when the bands were put down, and is now a very good gardener. The rest are friends of his," he added, with a shrewd gesticulation, which conveyed the full sense of what he meant.

"And the courier?" demanded Adam Gray. "Pray who is he?"

"Oh, he has come with some Englishman," replied Giacchino—"a Count something or another, which would break an Italian's teeth to speak."

"There you are mistaken," exclaimed Adam Gray. "We have no counts in England, Master Giacchino, though there are viscounts enough in all conscience. But pray what was he doing with the banditti?—going to sell his master to them?"

"No, no," replied Giacchino; "he said his master would like to see them, and talk to them. It seems that he is fond of such fishes."

In such conversation they plodded on their way, till they reached the dwelling of the young Englishman, and the old man, leaving his companion below, proceeded through all the open doors and corridors of an Italian house, till he reached the room where Morley usually sat. He entered without ceremony, but was not a little surprised to find that his master was not alone.

Morley was standing with his hand leaning on the back of a chair, his brow knit, and his teeth closed, while Lieberg appeared within three or four paces, with his arms folded on his chest, his head erect, and his dark eyes flashing like a thunder-cloud. What had previously taken place, no one ever heard, but it was clear that angry words had already passed between them.

"Your language, Sir Morley Ernstein," said Lieberg, "is well-nigh insulting, and must not be repeated."

"I have told you, Count Lieberg," replied Morley, "the plain truth, for which truth you pressed me. Having to thank you for some kindness, nothing can be farther from my wish than to insult you; but, at the same time, you must not urge me too far. Your advice I relish not; and though I do not, as you insinuate, pretend to anything like perfect purity of thought, word, or action—God forbid that I should be such a hypocrite!—and though I may yield to temptation, when it comes upon me, as weakly as any man, yet I will never calmly and deliberately lay out a plan for seducing a woman from that faith to

which she has sworn at the altar. When I said that I should consider myself a villain if I did so, I had a reference to my own feelings and my own principles, in direct opposition to which I have no right to act. You see the matter in a different light, and I pretend not to criticise or to censure your views or your actions. The temptation may come, and I may fall, as you say; I fear it might be so—I am sure it might be so; but I will never seek the temptation myself."

"You will repent," replied Lieberg, still frowning on him—"you will repent your language towards me this night.—I am better as a friend than an enemy."

"You drive me, sir, to say harsh things," answered Morley, sternly; "but I fear you less as the latter than the former. One word more, Count Lieberg, before you go," he added, as Lieberg turned towards the door. I have this morning received a letter from a lady, whom I find you have seen oftener than I believed. I do not understand all that she means; but Miss Barham places the name of Count Lieberg so close to the term—'a man who persecutes me,' that, as we part apparently not soon to meet again, it may be as well to say, that I look upon that lady as a sister, will protect her as such, and will treat any man who insults or injures her, as I would one who wronged my nearest relation."

Lieberg's lip curled with a sarcastic smile. "Your knight-errantry, Sir Morley," he said, "may lead you into scrapes; but you are a very wise and prudent young man, and doubtless will extricate yourself delicately from all embarrassments. As you have added a word to me, however, I must add one to you. It shall be a short one, for the evening sky is beginning to turn grey, and I must seek a more hospitable roof. It is this—do not cross my path, or I will blast you like a withered leaf; and so, good night!"

With his usual calm, firm step, Lieberg descended the stairs, and quitted the villa. Morley's eyes flashed; but old Adam Gray hastened to interpose, telling his master all that he had seen and heard during that afternoon.

"This is very strange!" said Morley, musing. "Send the man, Giacchino, to me—or, stay, ask him yourself, if the name the courier mentioned was that of Count Lieberg. He may be meditating some harm to that poor girl, and yet I must not—dare not go to Sorrento myself. Go, good Adam, and inquire. It is all very strange!—That Juliet should come to Sorrento, when she knows that I am so near!—It seems as if it were my fate to be doomed to do wrong, even when I labour to avoid it.—I will not go!"

Old Adam Gray came back in a moment, saying that Giacchino was quite sure that the name of Count Lieberg was the one he had heard; and Morley, seriously alarmed, instantly took means to warn Helen of the vague but not unfounded apprehensions which he entertained. He sent the peasant who farmed the estate attached to the villa, and two of his own servants, over to Sorrento, with orders to stay with the young lady, and give her protection during the night; and after explaining his motives for this step in a short note, he added—"I would have come myself at once, but that you tell me Juliet and her party from Sicily are about to join you this day at Sorrento. Dear Helen, I must never see her more, for I dare not trust myself. I am tempted in a way that you cannot divine; and I must fly from that temptation, lest even greater misfortunes fall upon her and me. Keep the men I send, till Juliet comes; after that, her servants, added to your own, will, I trust, ensure your safety."

"Now despatch the people quickly, good Adam," said Morley, giving him the note; "but, above all things, bid them keep a horse saddled, and let me know if anything important occurs at Sorrento. They can be over here in less than ten minutes. Have all our men prepared for whatever may occur; and see if there be not some more horses to be procured in the neighbourhood. If so let them be brought in. We might have to ride over in haste."

CHAPTER LVII.

THE SHIPWRECK.

LIEBERG had not said true when he declared that the evening sky was beginning to turn grey. It was purple that it grew, that intense deep purple which is only to be seen in southern skies, where the sunshine seems to infuse a tint of gold into the azure of the heaven, rendering it like the lazuli stone, in which the sparks of the metal may be seen through the fine hue of the gem. More and more red was every moment mingled with the blue, till the western horizon, where it lay upon the waters, glowed as if with intense fire, which seemed to catch the waves themselves, and all the distant sea was in a flame. The splendour of the hour, however, was unseen by the eyes of Morley Ernstein—but I use, perhaps, a wrong expression, it was not altogether unseen; and though I am so near the end of my history, where events press for attention rather than scenes or sensations, I must still pause for a moment to show how he saw without seeing, and felt without perceiving.

When Lieberg had left him, and his orders had been given, he went forth from the house with his heart full of strong emotions. He stood upon the promontory over the cave, and gazed, or seemed to gaze, across the wide world of waters, lighted by the setting sun. Though he had heard many things that day to interest and occupy him—though he had learned that Veronica had abandoned the world and taken the veil, and that Juliet was once more drawing near—his mind was fixed upon himself, and upon the act he had just done—an act as great and important to him and to his future fate as if he had conquered a kingdom. He had broken a tie, bound round him by circumstances with such close and intimate folds, that it had appeared as if it could never be totally dissevered. He had cast off a fatal companionship for ever, which had endured already too long.

By a strong effort of determination, he had repudiated a society which seemed destined to corrupt all the pure current of his blood, like the envenomed garment of Alcides, though happily for himself he had thrown it from him before it had entered into his flesh.

He stood, then, upon that promontory with his head erect, and his arms folded on his broad chest, feeling that he had done a right and a great act, that he had executed a strong and high determination, and deriving from the very fact the conscious dignity which the powerful performance of a wise resolution always imparts to the human mind. He marked not the sunset and its splendour—he marked not the illuminated ocean, or the classic shores in their purple shadows—he marked not the fire of the western sky, or the clouds glowing into a blaze above, but the whole sank into his spirit through the eye, and seemed to elevate his own sensations more and more by the harmonious tone of every thing around. He felt that it was in such a scene, in such a climate, in such an hour, that man might well do deeds worthy of his immortal soul. That under the eye of Heaven, and with the brightest of Heaven's works on every side, he might well purify his heart of its dross, and cast from him every baser thing. It was not unseen, then, all the loveliness that surrounded him; it was not unfelt; but, in the busy turmoil of his own thoughts, it was unmarked.

Ere the sun had quite gone down, however, his mind became more calm, he recollected where he stood, he ran his eye along the line of coast, he raised it to the sky above, he gazed pensively at the sea below his feet, and marked the long, bow-like sails that skimmed across the waters towards the resting-place for the night.

The whole bay and the sea beyond it were alive with boats, and Morley Ernstein thought—"Amongst all those is probably one that bears to the same shore with myself, her who, I once believed, was to be my leading star to every high act and noble purpose; but who has left me in darkness and despair. Over those waters her bark is steering, and, perhaps, her mind no longer with the eye of memory sees him whom she once loved, any more than her corporeal eye beholds me here. How calm everything is—how tranquil! and that small cloud, catching the last rays of the sun, glows like the conscious cheek of love. I wonder why all the boats are hurrying into Naples! This seems to me the very hour for lingering on the sea. I will go out and sail again;" and as he thus thought, he beckoned one of his boatmen, whom he saw on the beach below, to come up by the steps in the rock and speak with him. Ere the man could reach him, however, a change had come over the whole scene. The waves in the bay became crested with white foam—a sudden rushing sound was heard. Then came a light breath of air; and then a number of orange trees and large oleanders, which were ranged upon the terrace of the villa, were levelled with the ground in a moment by a violent gust of wind. Morley himself, strong and powerful as he was, was obliged to catch at a great ilex for support. Leaves and branches were torn up and whirled away, and a thin, dusty film was carried suddenly over sea and land, not sufficient to intercept the sight, but to render all the lately glowing features of the scene grey and sad. Whistling and screaming through the branches of the trees, over the rocks and stones, and through the windows and porticos, the storm rushed on; and the Neapolitan servants ran hither and thither, closing the windows, and increasing the din and confusion by their shouts, and outcries, and gesticulations. As soon as he had somewhat recovered himself, Morley placed his back against the tree, the large branches of which were waving to and fro like reeds, and gazed out upon the sea. When he last looked in that direction, he had seen a vessel, apparently steering from Capri, and sailing gallantly on towards Lorento. He had then regarded it with that indefinite feeling of interest which often attaches to one particular thing amongst many similar ones, we cannot tell why or wherefore. Perhaps it was a thought which casually struck him that Juliet might be on board of that polacca, which caused him to look at the vessel I have mentioned more intently than any of the rest. But whatever it might be, she had formed a beautiful object in the view, with all sails set, and the last red light of the sun dying her canvas with bright crimson. When he turned his eyes towards her again, however, now that the squall was raging with such fury, he could hardly believe she was the same ship. One of her masts was gone, and seemed to lay over the side, only attached to the vessel by the cordage. It was evident that the crew were taking in sail, and endeavouring to ease her in every way; but while Morley still gazed, the other mast went overboard, and she lay a complete log on the water, with the gale still blowing tremendously and dead upon the shore, and the night coming rapidly on.

Climbing slowly up the stairs in the rock, the boatman, to whom Morley had beckoned, now approached him with difficulty, and the young Englishman, pointing to the vessel in distress, asked if he knew what she was. He replied that she was some Sicilian polacca, and that he had seen her lying off Capri, while they were out sailing in the morning.

"She'll not see another day rise," added the man. "Many a poor sinner has gone to purgatory already to-night. Did you see that felucca upset and go down, sir, just as she was getting round the point?"

"No," answered Morley, "no; but we must not leave that ship to perish. You must get out the boat—I will go off to her."

The man laughed at the very idea. It is true, the wind was blowing dead upon the land, the sea running tremendously high, the gale scarcely abated at all of its fury, the night coming on dark and stormy, and the heavens looking totally unlike the pure, clear, star-lit skies that had hung above them for the last six weeks. While he was still arguing with his master, however, a faint, distant flash, and the booming roar of a gun from the polacca, appealed to the heart of

the young Englishman for help; and assuming a somewhat sterner tone, he bade the man gather together his companions and prepare the boat, in the language of command. He obeyed so far as collecting together the rest of the boatmen went, but no progress was made in getting the boat ready, and they remained drawn into a knot, talking eagerly and gesticulating violently, screaming, shouting, grinning, laughing, and almost weeping, in a manner that can only be seen in Italy.

Morley waited for a minute or two with some impatience, and then approaching them, used every means that the reader may conceive to induce them to accompany him. He succeeded so far, at length, that one of the younger men yielded, and declared he would go, if the padrone would but stay a quarter of an hour to let the wind go down. Such a squall, he said, never lasted long, and at all events it would be more moderate. The consent of one soon brought that of the rest, and Morley ordered them, in the mean time, to make every preparation. Hoping, perhaps, that he would change his purpose, they contrived to extend the quarter of an hour to nearly double that time, notwithstanding all their master's impatience and reiterated commands, while the darkness increased, and gun after gun told the dangerous situation of the vessel, and each showed, by the greater brightness of the flash and loudness of the sound, that she was driving rapidly upon the rocky coast.

At length, however, an effort was made, the boat was pushed out of the cove, and rowed through the calmer water of the little bay. A tremendous sea was still running beyond, although the violence of the wind had certainly somewhat diminished; and old Adam Gray, who, without a word, had watched the proceedings of his master, knowing too well that the attempt to restrain him would be in vain, now, from the top of the rock, gazed at the boat rushing out into the waves, and kept his eyes upon it till it was lost to his sight amidst the dark struggling waters. He tried to catch it again, but in vain: all was dim upon the face of the sea; and then turning his eyes towards the spot where the signals of distress, from time to time, showed the position of the polacca, he remained with his grey hair floating in the wind, and his heart full of sad and anxious apprehensions.

After a time the firing ceased, and the old man muttered to himself—"They have either reached her, or she has gone down." Then came the longest and most terrible space of expectation. Everything was darkness around; the only sound that interrupted the silence was the fierce rushing of the wind, which still continued to blow with awful fury; the sky at the same time was covered with clouds, so that no light fell upon the waters, and the only sight that met the eyes of old Adam Gray, as he gazed down from above, was the white foaming tops of the waves, which seemed boiling as in a caldron.

"I wonder" he thought, "if I were to pile up a beacon here, whether he would understand what it meant? At all events it would show him the villa and the rocks, so as to enable him to steer. I will try it at all risks;" and calling to several of the other servants, who were down below looking out as well as himself, he made them gather together a quantity of old wood which had been left in a corner of the vineyard, and, with one or two decayed olive-trees, which had just been cut down, a fire was soon lighted on the extreme verge of the rock, and in about ten minutes spread its red glare far and wide.

Perhaps the good man expected that, besides giving light to any one who might be wandering over the surface of the waters, it would enable him also to see what was passing on the waves below; but in this he was mistaken, and for a quarter of an hour longer he watched in vain. During that time the wind subsided still more, and at length Adam Gray thought he heard his master's voice raised loudly. A moment after, a slight flash, like that of a pistol, was seen in the little bay, and the rocks around echoed with the report.

"Quick! light the torches—light the torches!" cried the old man; and, taking one of the flambeaux which he had brought out, he ran down the steps through the rock, to the place where the boat was usually hauled up. The other servants followed, but before they reached the shore the grating sound of her keel was heard, and the first sight presented to the eyes of Adam Gray was his master, pale and dripping, carrying across the narrow ledge of rock the form of a lady, whose face rested on his shoulder, while her arms were clasped tightly round him.

The blaze of the torches seemed to rouse her, or else it was some words that Morley whispered, for she raised her head, exclaiming—"Now, now, Morley, set me down! There are others need your care."

"Not yet," said Morley; "not till you are under shelter. This, at least, I have a right to do. Light us up the rock, good Adam; the rest stay here till you have got out the other woman. Captain," he added, speaking in Italian to a tall, athletic man, who had sprung to the shore after him—"take care of your own people, and follow us to the villa. Are you sure the other boat went down?"

"I saw it sink," replied the man, in a sad tone; and hurrying on up the steps, with Juliet in his arms, Morley paused not till he had laid her on a sofa in the saloon; then bending down his head he kissed her cheek, saying—"Thank God!" After gazing on her for a moment, he added—"Now I will see to your cousin. I fear she is much worse. Here, my good women," he continued, speaking to the wife of the contadino and her daughters, who had followed him into the house, "there is a lady below who will much want your care. Come with me."

In a few minutes he returned, bearing Lady Malcolm in his arms apparently lifeless. She was soon carried to his own bedroom, and every

means were employed to restore her that the experience of any of the party could suggest. Juliet forgot herself and all she had suffered in her anxiety for her cousin; but, ere long, she had the happiness to hear her utter a few words of thanks and hope.

"Now leave her with me and her woman," said the wife of the contadino, who had shown skill as well as tenderness in her care of the sufferer; "a few hours' sleep will do more for her than anything else. Go with that lady, girls," she continued, speaking to her own daughters; "and find her some clothes, for she is very wet."

Morley led Juliet forth, and then, in the same grave tone in which he had hitherto spoken, besought her to change her dress, and take some refreshment and repose. "I must go myself," he added, "to make sure that there is assistance at hand, in case of any of the poor wretches in the other boat reaching the shore. Though they abandoned you and their companions, we must not abandon them. Farewell, then, for to-night. Lie down to rest. We shall meet again to-morrow—Juliet."

Juliet gazed on him in silence and sadness, but made no reply, and Morley left her.

About an hour was spent by the young Englishman in sending people with lights along the rocks, but without any result. The boat with which some of the seamen had left the ship, had, as the master of the vessel said, gone down almost immediately, and the bodies of those that it contained were not found for several days.

With a slow and thoughtful step while the moon began to struggle with the clouds, Morley Ernstein returned to his own dwelling, passed along the corridor, gave some orders to Adam Gray, and entered the saloon. To his surprise, on raising his eyes, he beheld Juliet standing as if watching for his return. Morley paused for a moment, gazed at her with a look full of emotion that could not be spoken; then closed the door, and, advancing, threw his arms around her, and pressed her to his heart. Juliet strove not to withdraw herself, but leaned her face upon his bosom, and wept.

"Juliet," he said, in a low voice, as he felt her heart throbbing against his—"Juliet, we must never part!—It is no longer happiness or misery with me, Juliet—it is life or death. You are mine, or no other sun ever rises for me again, Choose, Juliet—choose! The words of fate are upon your lips. If you love me, you are mine—if you love me not, I am nothing!"

"I do—I do!" cried Juliet throwing her own arms around him, and speaking with a vehemence that he had never known her use; "I do love you, Morley—I always have loved you—I never loved any but you. Think not you have suffered alone, Morley,—oh, I have endured more than it is possible for human language to declare! Can you doubt that I love you? If you do, tell me how you will have me prove my love, and I am ready to do it, even though the breaking of my vow should break my heart, and destroy me here, as well as bring wrath upon my head hereafter. Speak, Morley—speak!—Love you? Oh, yes! better than anything on earth—better, I fear, than heaven!"

Morley clasped her closer to his heart, and pressed his lips again and again upon her brow and cheek; they burned, as if with fire. She had asked him what he would have her do, and now he told her, with all the eloquent words of passion. He saw her gaze wildly upon him: he thought that she hesitated. Then all the fell words with which Lieberg had urged him came back to his memory, and he was about to employ their power upon her also—from the tempted to become the tempter!

But happily—oh, most happily for both! Juliet replied, before he had blasted her esteem.

"Say no more, Morley," she said—"say no more—I am yours for ever;" and she put her hand in his. "Oh, Lord God!" she added, "if I sin in breaking the solemn vow I made to those who first gave me life, forgive me in thy mercy! But for him, on whose account I break it, that life which they gave would now be at an end. His is the existence that I henceforth possess, and surely it can be no crime to dedicate it all to him! I will try, Morley," she continued—"I will try to forget that vow that I have made to those who are dead, or to think that I am now exempt from its obligation; yet I fear it will often return to make your Juliet sad, and that my peace of mind will always be disturbed by the thought of a parent's curse."

Morley cast down his eyes, as one bewildered. He gazed thoughtfully on the ground for several moments. He trembled at the feeling of a great escape: and then he murmured—"Here has been some mistake! Tell me, Juliet, what was this vow? It cannot be binding on you now, but yet I must hear it."

"Hear it, Morley, and decide for me," said Juliet, with a melancholy look; "the vow is a double one. My mother, Morley, on her death-bed—after a life of grief and sorrow for having disobeyed her own parent—exacted from me a solemn pledge that I would never become the wife of any man to whom my father forbade me to give my hand. Morley, he did forbid me to unite myself to you. He demanded from me a vow that I would not, on my duty as his child; and his last words were the bitterest—the most awful curse upon my head if I disobeyed."

There was a step in the room, which caused Juliet to turn her head, while Morley, whose face was towards the door, made an impetuous sign to the person who had entered to retire; but old Adam Gray came in with a respectful, but a determined countenance, and Juliet, with a glowing cheek, withdrew herself from Morley's arm.

"I beg your pardon, Sir Morley," cried the old man; "but what I have to say must be said—I can keep it down no longer; I care not whether it offends or not! I have loved you from a boy, sir, and will tell you the truth, even though it make you angry. The young lady that you are talking to—I do not mean to say anything against her—though she has made you unhappy enough, I'm sure."

"Quit the room, Adam Gray!" exclaimed Morley, sternly.

"Not till I've told you, sir," replied the old servant. "I've heard it's her father's will makes her do all this; but she is no more what she fancies herself than I am. Your father always said, sir, that she was not old Carr's daughter, and wished Lady Malcolm—that is, Lady Clavering, as I ought to call her now—to try it with him. That was the cause of the quarrel; for your father said he was a swindler; and, you know, all Mrs. Carr's property went to Lady Malcolm, if she had not a child; and so, when their baby died, he got this young lady up from Sergeant More's wife, who had it to nurse; but the cheat was as plain as possible, for this baby was six weeks old, and the other but a day or two; but as poor Mrs. Carr was so ill that she knew nothing about it, and the baby was brought up by hand, nobody could prove it then, except the nurse and Mrs. More. I can prove it now, however, and that I will, too, let come of it what may."

The old man paused to take breath, for he had spoken with all the eager rapidity of one who, having broken through habitual respect, is fearful lest the impulse which gave him courage to do so should fail him. The effect produced upon Morley and Juliet, however, was very different from what he expected. At first both seemed bewildered, but then a look of joy and satisfaction inexpressible came upon his master's countenance, and, casting his arms round her he loved, Morley exclaimed—"Mine—mine, Juliet!—you are mine, without a fear and without a regret, without one cloud to shadow the sunshine of our love!"

"Oh, is it—can it be true?" cried Juliet. "Tell me—tell me," she continued, disengaging herself from Morley's embrace, and laying her hand upon the old man's arm—"can you prove it?—can you show, beyond a doubt, that I am not his child? I would give anything—I would give everything—but, alas!" she added, suddenly recollecting herself, "if it be as you say, Adam Gray, I shall have nothing to give—I shall be a beggar, Morley.—Will you value your Juliet less?"

"A thousand-fold more, dearest!" replied her lover. "There was an internal conviction of the truth in my heart, from the very first. I was sure that old man could not be your father—that the same blood never ran in his veins and in yours."

"And whose, then, is the blood that runs in mine?" said Juliet, thoughtfully. "It is strange, Morley—very strange!—and yet I own that I am most thankful to God it is as it is; for amongst many painful things that I have endured through life, one of the most painful has been, a conviction that I was not really an affectionate and tender daughter—that I could nor love my father as natural impulse would prompt one to do. Often have I struggled with myself, often have I wept over my own sensations, and have thought that, though he was unkind, and cold, and bitter towards me, if I had really the feelings which a child ought to have, I should forget every sort of harsh and chilling act in filial love. But, oh! I do regret my mother—I do regret my poor mother!—she was always gentle and affectionate, and fond of me."

"Because she *thought* you were her child; and he *knew* you were not his," replied Adam Gray—"that was the cause of the difference, Miss Juliet; and though I can't understand how you and Sir Morley have settled matters, so as to seem very happy at what I feared might make you otherwise, I hope you will forgive me; and as to proving it, I have got Mrs. More's declaration myself, signed with her own hand, and her daughter has got all the papers which the old woman left at her death. I promised not to say a word till she was dead, and should not, indeed, have told it now, but that I thought you were ill-using my poor master, Miss Juliet."

"I hope I have not done so," said Juliet, with a sad smile at the old man's bluntness. "One may sometimes be obliged to make those they love unhappy, without ill-using them. Adam Gray, I think you should have known me better. But, however, perhaps now I may have the power of rendering him happy instead. Morley, you seem sad."

"No," answered Morley, "I am not, my beloved; but even in intense joy itself, such as I now experience, there may be a melancholy, Juliet—at all events a pensiveness—there must be, indeed, as long as man feels in his own heart that he is utterly unworthy of the goodness and mercy of God. Together with the sensation of relief and blessing which was given me by the tidings of this night, and the knowledge that you are mine without one shade of regret hanging over our union, came the recollection of how little I had merited such joy, how I had repined and struggled, how many evil acts I had actually been guilty of under the influence of despair, how many more I might have been tempted to commit, how many I was upon the very eve of plunging into. I must not tell you, Juliet—I cannot tell you all that my words to you this very night implied, before I found what were really the ties that bound you."

"Say not a word, dear Morley—say not a word," replied Juliet, sadly but tenderly; "it has been bitter enough to know that I have been making you wretched as well as myself. What would it be to think that I had plunged you into any evil?"

"It is past, Juliet!" said Morley; "and though the last year will ever remain upon my memory as one dark and gloomy spot, yet, dear girl, it may be no disadvantage to me to be a humbler man for the rest of my life, from sad experience of my own weakness.—But hark!" he exclaimed, hearing a sound unusual in that remote place; "there is the galloping of a horse's feet. I hope no bad news from Sorrento. Run down and see, good Adam, and bring me word quickly."

CHAPTER LVIII.

A MYSTERY.

MORLEY ERNSTEIN had not been alone in watching with eager terror the progress of the storm, and the wreck of the Sicilian polacca, on the night, with the events of which we have lately been busy. Helen Barham, also, had seen the first effects of the squall, with terror the more intense, because she knew, not only that Juliet must be at that very time upon the waters, but also because she was aware that she must be within a few leagues of the shore of Sorrento, upon which the wind was blowing with such dreadful vehemence. Juliet had written her a note from Capri, where they had paused for an hour or two to see the island, and had even so accurately described the vessel, that Helen had seen and recognized it before the storm began. Each howl of the gale, when it first commenced, made her heart sink with apprehension; and though there be some people in the world, unfortunately, who may dream that thoughts would come across Helen's mind to check, if not to mitigate, her anxiety for her friend, yet be it said, most truly, that Helen only remembered Juliet at that moment as one who had ever been tender and kind, who had been a sister to her when the ties of kindred failed, who had loved her with disinterested love, and soothed her in the time of sorrow and mourning.

As soon as it was possible, notwithstanding the fury of the wind, she went out to the highest point of the coast, though it required all the strength of Harry Martin, and another strong man, to steady her steps. But Helen could not resolve to remain within, while one whom she so dearly loved was perishing amidst the waves; and on the top of the promontory she found a number of Italians, gazing out likewise, with their eyes all fixed upon that vessel—now mastless, and abandoned to the fury of the waters—which was growing dimmer and more dim to their sight, as the beams of day were fading away from the sky. Then came the signals of distress, and all those terrible moments, ere the polacca was totally hidden by the night. But Helen, though powerless, remained not inactive; she endeavoured, though in vain, to induce the fishermen to put off a boat; she inquired fruitlessly for any persons more venturous than the rest; she offered sums that seemed of incredible magnitude to the poor Sorrentines, for any one who would go forth to give aid to the vessel in distress. None would undertake it; and as the night went on, one by one the people who had been assembled dropped away, and left her standing there, still gazing out into the darkness, but unable to tear herself from the spot.

At length, the same idea struck Harry Martin, which had occurred to old Adam Gray. "In half-an-hour from this time, madam," he said, "that ship will be upon these rocks. Will it not be better to get a number of men, with torches, all ready to help and save as many of the crew as possible?"

"Oh, yes, yes!" cried Helen; "fly, by all means, fly, and collect as many as possible. Pay them well, and promise a large reward for every life that is saved. Go quick, my good friend, go quick! I will return to the villa with the courier. I fear I can do no good here. Never mind me, Martin, but gather the people together, as fast as possible."

According to her orders, Harry Martin left her; and after remaining for about ten minutes more, Helen was turning to go back to her own dwelling, when one of the servants of the villa came up, seeking for her in the darkness, to tell her that some people had been sent over to Sorrento by Sir Morley Ernstein, who entertained some apprehensions regarding her safety. Scarcely had the man spoken, when the dim forms of two or three other persons were seen sauntering up the rocky road, and Helen, somewhat alarmed at what she heard, and not liking their appearance, hastened her steps. She passed another and another, without being able, in the obscurity, to discern their faces; and the sound of footfalls following made her heart beat strangely. At length four men presented themselves, linked arm in arm, and at the same moment a loud whistle was heard from those behind. At that signal an immediate rush was made upon Helen, and those who were with her. The two men were knocked down in an instant; and Helen, caught up by arms which it was in vain to resist, was borne away, shrieking, and calling for help in vain.

"This way, Excellenza, this way!" cried a voice, in Italian, while the speaker apparently ran on before; "round by this wall, and the back of the houses, or we shall be stopped. Once on the road to Vico, and we are safe. The house you bade us get is that way—the other men will take care we are not pursued. Here, round to the right, sir."

Helen ceased not, however, to cry for help, as long as strength remained, but it was in vain, and for two miles the man who carried her bore her on with a rapidity that made his own breath come thick and hard. At length, as they were entering what seemed a wilder, and less cultivated part of the country, where the walls of the vineyards and gardens had ceased, and nothing was before them but the hills covered with their odoriferous plants, he paused, saying—"I must stop for a minute. Bid the men make a circle round us."

"Oh!" cried Helen; "for pity's sake let me go. What have I done to injure you? If you will let me go, you shall have any ransom that you name."

"Ransom!" he replied, speaking in English, and in a voice too well known; "half a world should not ransom you, till you become a thing that you yourself loathe and hate. You scorned my love in England, you scorned it still more bitterly at Rome, but now I have you amongst these wild hills, and the God that delivers you, will be a God indeed! Come on, my men, come on!" he continued, "see, the moon is

breaking through the clouds, and the wind is going down; we are still too near the houses.—Come on, quick, I say; I think I hear a horse's feet."

Helen heard the same sound, and shrieked aloud for aid, but help did not come; they hurried her on: the echo of the horse's feet died away, and Lieberg said, in a bitter tone—"He hears not the sweet music; or, like the deaf adder, he stoppeth his ear to the song of the charmer. Your mode of journeying is unpleasant, perhaps; it will soon be over, lady, so content yourself for a time."

When he had gone about a quarter of a mile farther, however, a distant noise met the ears of the whole party, not like the noise of one horse's feet, but as if there were many, coming up at the full gallop by the same path which they were pursuing. Helen found her persecutor's arms clasped more tightly round her, while his pace grew still more rapid, and, confirmed by these signs in the faint hope she entertained of assistance being near, she again called aloud for help.

"Tie this over her mouth," cried one of the men, giving Lieberg a handkerchief; "they cannot trace us here, unless her screams bring them up."

"That accursed moon will betray us," exclaimed Lieberg. "Cannot we get down into the hollow way?"

"They will hem us in there," cried the man. "By the body of Bacchus, they have got round, and are before us! Bend down, Excellenza, bend down!—Curse that screaming! I will drive my knife into her!"

"Here, take her," cried Lieberg. "We shall have to fight them.—Call up some of the men from behind.—Tie her, and keep her here!—They cannot be so many as we are. We will soon disperse them.—Here come three, right down upon us—call up some of the men from behind, I say!"

The man to whom he spoke uttered the same loud whistle that Helen had heard before, but at that very moment two or three shots were heard from the ground which they had just passed over, and then a whole volley, while the three horsemen, who had galloped on and intercepted Lieberg's farther progress, caught sight of him by the clear moonlight, and were coming down at full speed.

"Huzza! we have them—we have them!" cried the voice of Harry Martin.—"In God's name, leave him to me, Sir Morley.—You look to the lady."

But as he spoke, two of Lieberg's hired ruffians rushed up, in that picturesque and never-to-be-mistaken costume which the Italian bandits have affected, with the ribands on their hats floating wildly in the gale, and their long guns carried easily in their hands.

"We cannot help you," they cried—"we cannot help you; they are too many for us. Bertolo is down, and so is Marino."

"But strike one stroke," exclaimed Lieberg, furiously; "here are but three before us."

"But there are twenty behind," answered one of the men. "However, here goes;" and, raising his gun to his shoulder, he fired.

His companion followed his example, the very moment after, and instantly one of their opponents went down, horse and man together. Another horse reared and plunged, but darted forward again with a staggering pace, and the horseman finding that the beast was wounded, sprang to the ground, and cast away the rein. The other man, who had fallen also, started up, and two of Lieberg's companions, each taking a separate way, turned and fled. The man who still remained mounted was turning his rein to pursue them, but the voice Morley Ernstein stopped him, exclaiming—"This way—this way! There stands the villain himself. I know him but too well."

"This for you, Sir Morley Ernstein," shouted Lieberg, levelling a pistol, and firing at the same moment.

Morley staggered back, but the ball, discharged from too great a distance, only hurt him slightly, and the next moment he darted forward again.

"Shall I kill her?" cried the Italian, who stood beside Lieberg.

His master paused for a single instant, then caught Helen up again in his arms, asking—"The cliff is near, is it not?" and without waiting a reply, he ran with the swiftness of lightning up the side of the hill. The moon was now shining clear, as I have said and the whole party beheld and followed him. The man on horseback contrived to turn him once, as a greyhound does a hare, but neither Morley nor Harry Martin, though, by their companion's manœuvre, they gained upon him considerably, dared to fire for fear of hitting Helen.

At length Lieberg paused, but it was only on the very verge of the rock overlooking the sea; and there he stood, laughing aloud with the peculiar mocking laugh which always marked that he thought he had won the day. His tall, magnificent form was seen clear and distinct by the moonlight, and Morley and those who were with him, not three paces distant, could even distinguish his features and the look of dark and savage triumph by which they were animated.

"Keep back, Sir Morley Ernstein," he cried, "and hear a word or two! When first we met, I felt that the fate of one of us depended on the other. You have me at bay, but I have my advantage too. If you drive me over this precipice, you not only destroy a woman who loves you, but you kill your own brother—ay! your father's son, Sir Morley, by a lady of higher rank than your own low-born dam. Have you any scruples of fraternal tenderness?—I have none!" and at the same moment he clasped Helen tightly round the waist with his left arm, and stretched out his right with a second pistol in the act to fire.

Ere he could draw the trigger, however, with a bound, which cleared the intervening space in an instant, Harry Martin was upon him. One powerful arm was cast round Helen, tearing her from her persecutor; the other pressed a pistol right into Lieberg's ear.—The cock fell—there

was a flash and a report; and, reeling back, with Helen in his arms, from the edge of the precipice, over which he had nearly fallen in his effort to rescue her, the hardy Englishman exclaimed—"I have saved you—by G—, I have saved you!"

And where was Lieberg? He had disappeared; and though Sir Morley Ernstein caused long and diligent search to be made for his body under the cliffs upon the following morning, it was nowhere to be found. The sea did not approach near enough to have washed it away; none of the peasants or fishermen had seen or heard of it; and the only thing that could give any indication of his fate, was a drop or two of blood on the spot where he had stood.

CHAPTER LIX.

CONCLUSION.

THERE are few sensations that affect the heart of man which are more impressive, I might almost say sublime, than those which he feels when he wakes from the first sleep that is afforded to him after strange and stirring events, when some vast change has been effected, when some great result has been achieved. During that dark and terrible night—that night so full of joy and pain, which we have spoken of in the last chapter, Morley Ernstein obtained but little refreshing repose. Much confusion and agitation took place in his own dwelling after he returned thither with Helen Barham; and the emotions of joy, we all know, are not less exciting than even those of grief.

The meeting between Juliet and Helen was in itself affecting to both, and equally so to him who witnessed it; but Helen Barham was the same as she had always been—generous and enthusiastic in her affections, and thinking far less of herself than others. When Morley, indeed, led her into the room where Juliet waited his return with anxious expectation, her heart fluttered, and her lips murmured a few words which might perhaps be prayer; but she cast her arms round her friend, and told her all the terror and the anguish she had felt while uncertain of her fate upon the sea.

"But now," she added, after the events which had just taken place upon the hill had been related to their fair auditor—"from all I see, and from a few words which he has spoken, dear Juliet, I believe I may thank God, not only for saving you from destruction, but for restoring you fully to him towards whom I am such a debtor. To see you two happy will be the greatest of happiness to me, for, indeed, I may well say that I love you both, better than any beings on this earth; and I am very sure, as no one can ever confer such benefits upon me as you have done, so will no one ever arise even to share in that affection which is your due from me."

In conversation such as this, and in inquiries, explanations, and arrangements, two or three hours passed after Morley's return, and it wanted but a short time of the dawn when he laid his head down to rest. Thought occupied that space, and the sky was growing grey with the approach of daylight, when sleep fell upon the young Englishman's eyes. He slept for about two hours, then rose, and went out to gaze over the sea. All was calm and tranquil. The storm which had swept the waters on the preceding evening had passed away; sunshine, and brightness, and tranquillity, had returned; and Morley could not help finding a symbol in the atmospheric changes of that night, of the workings of his own fate, which had just taken place. He felt that a tempest had swept over him, had passed, and had left a calm to come back again and soothe his heart. He raised his voice to God, and thanked him for the infinity of his mercies.

Morley Ernstein had yet more to be grateful for than perhaps he already knew; but he was quite satisfied with his fate, and sought to inquire no farther. He comprehended easily how, with rash haste, he had concluded that Juliet had become Lady Clavering, and would have asked no farther questions on a subject, the very memory of which was painful to him, had not the good Countess herself, with her usual kindly simplicity, thought it right to explain to her young friend—as soon as she could get down, on the day following the shipwreck—all the reasons and motives of her marriage with Lord Clavering.

"I dare say you, my dear Morley," she said, "and a great number of other people, thought it a very silly thing for an old woman like myself to do, and perhaps for my good lord also; but we have known each other for some thirty years, and have seen each other at periods of great grief for the loss of those we loved better than we shall ever love again. We both found ourselves somewhat solitary in life; and therefore, when I saw that Juliet here had made up her mind to give her hand to you, I listened to the proposal of Lord Clavering, though I had some time before hesitated to agree to it. You may be very sure, my dear Morley, that neither wealth nor station was my object; for though my income was a very limited one, I always made it answer my purposes, and, at all events, it was as great as my ambition."

"Had you waited a little," said Morley, looking at Juliet with a smile, "your fortune would have been much increased."

Lady Clavering was surprised, but the tale was soon told, and Adam Gray himself sent for, to explain the whole. He now repeated what he had said the night before; but as proof of his assertions, he produced a paper which the widow of Sergeant More had signed, as the reader may recollect, when she was journeying over with him and her daughter to Doncaster. By this she acknowledged that, shortly after her arrival in England, whither she had come after leaving her husband with the army, she had taken up her abode in a small Yorkshire village, between Morley Court and Yelverly, with three children of her own, and one infant, the daughter of an

officer in the Austrian service, which she had brought from the Continent, leaving its father dying and its mother dead. She had received some kindness from the father of Sir Morley Ernstein on her first arrival, and he had seen the infant she brought. But before she had been a week in the cottage she inhabited, Mr. Carr himself came down one night in haste, and concluded with her a bargain, by which, for the sum of two hundred pounds, and the promise of future protection and support, she gave up to him the infant which she had brought to England, and, taking the dead child in its place, pretended that her little charge had fallen sick and expired. The motive assigned by Mr. Carr for his part of this proceeding was, that his wife would go distracted if she found her child had died. But Mrs. More soon began to hear rumours of a different sort; Sir Morley Ernstein's father came down to her, and with kindly, though serious admonitions, besought her to tell the truth in regard to the death of the child, as a considerable property was at stake. Mr. Carr himself ultimately acknowledged the fact to her; but by payment of a second sum, and obtaining her husband's promotion, induced her to go with Sergeant More to India, where she remained for eighteen or nineteen years.

Such were the contents of the paper which Adam Gray now read; but Jane Martin, he said, possessed all the more important documents, and she was soon brought from Sorrento, to throw what light she could upon the case. She produced four curious documents, perfectly sufficient to confirm all that the old man had asserted. The first was another clear statement by Mrs. More herself, precisely similar in all material points to the other: it was drawn up by her own hand, signed and witnessed. The next was an acknowledgment of the facts which she had extracted from Mr. Carr before she would consent to leave England. The third, was a certificate, in German, of the birth of Juliet Willoughby; and the fourth, a letter from her father, Captain Willoughby, to the rector of some parish in Yorkshire, recommending the child to his care, and begging him to interest the writer's elder brother in the poor orphan. On this letter was written, in Mrs. More's hand —"The rector had died of the fever before I got to England."

"Show me those two last papers," cried Lady Clavering, as Morley read them aloud; "let me see them, Morley—let me see them! Juliet, my dear child," she continued, casting her arms around her, after she had read and re-read the papers, "if you have lost one father, you have found another—that Captain Willoughby is my husband!"

It were needless to trouble the reader with farther explanations, or to ask his permission, like the vanquished party after a battle, "to bury our dead." If he will turn to the first part of this volume, he will see the reference made by Lord Clavering himself—which, probably, he skipped at the time, as being irrelevant to the history before him—to some of the circumstances of his early life, and I can afford him no farther information, not possessing any myself. Suffice it, that nobleman, on his arrival at Naples, about a fortnight afterwards, held Juliet to his heart, and wept over her as a long-lost child; and that without any tedious delay, he united his daughter to the man whom she had always loved.

For Morley, he was happier than even imagination, warmed by love and expectation, had been able to paint; and with Juliet by his side, let it be said, the good "Tenant of the Heart," the high, the holy, and the pure—the spirit of the soul, maintained a perpetual sway over her more earthly comrade.

Some five or six years after the period of this tale, the two cottages, which we have described as seated in the little glen near Warmstone Castle, appeared thrown into one, decorated with shrubs and flowers, and, generally, with three or four rosy children running about the doors. From the little garden-gate every morning, half-an-hour after sun-rise, might be seen to ride forth a very powerful man, growing, perhaps, a little heavy withal, but mounted on a stout Yorkshire horse, well fitted to carry him. The labourers and tenants touched their hat to the steward; and, though with a wary and a watchful eye he perambulated the property, seeing that no injustice was done to his beloved mistress, yet all the people on the land declared that Mr. Martin was a kind, good man; that he was tender to the poor, charitable to all, liberal to the active and industrious, and, above all things, clement, and no way harsh to an unconfirmed wrong-doer; for he himself well knew, that, whatever magistrates or lawgivers may say, *Mercy has power to reclaim.*

And of her, the mistress of the mansion, what have we to tell? That Helen remained Helen Barham still, in mind, in character, as well as in name. If there was regret resting as a shade upon her mind, if there was disappointment amongst the memories of the heart, the pure, high spirit veiled them from all eyes; and though I must not say she *struggled with* them —for there was nothing like contention in her breast, after Juliet and Morley were once united —yet she *repressed* all selfish feelings, and saw the happiness that their union produced with a bright, though grave, tranquillity. She laid out for herself, from that moment, her course of life. In the fair and calm abode which seemed to have been prepared expressly for her, she passed her future years in diffusing happiness and sunshine round her. The cottage knew her step well; and a class above that found her a kind and indulgent lady, healing all wounds, reconciling all differences, and silencing clamour and complaint. It was very seldom, throughout the whole neighbourhood, that sweet smile, and that soft voice, would not prevail, even where every harsher means had been tried in vain. She was a good neighbour, too, and a good friend; and her beauty, her extraordinary beauty, remained undiminished for many years. It was as if the pure and noble spirit had a balmy and preserving influence even upon her corporeal frame. There is one thing strange,

however, in regard to her fate; though many admired the lovely woman, and many coveted the hand of the wealthy heiress, no one ever ventured to ask that boon of Helen Barham.

Several years afterwards she besought Juliet to allow her to adopt one of her children, and make him heir of the property which had once been his father's. The boy spent several months with her in each succeeding year; and once—but only once—as he looked up with a bright and beaming smile in Helen's face, while she parted the beautiful hair upon his brow, her eyes filled with tears, and she clasped him to her bosom, with emotions that could not be restrained.

And Lieberg! Was nothing, then, ever heard of him? Can one form no conjecture, backed by sufficient probabilities, of his real fate?

Reader, his body was never found; but his spirit, alas! still lives, and pervades too many a scene, blasting with its presence what otherwise might be bright. Happy is the man who has not a Lieberg always very, very near him!

Where?

In his own heart!

THE END.

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